

# **UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

## **NOVICE PRINCIPALS: THE CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN FOUR SCHOOLS IN THE PINETOWN DISTRICT.**

**THEMBINKOSI ERIC MAKHANYA**

**2013**

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IN FOUR SCHOOLS IN THE PINETOWN DISTRICT.**

**BY**

**THEMBINKOSI ERIC MAKHANYA**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
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**2013**

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

T.E.Makhanya

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## **SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT**

This dissertation has been submitted with/ without my approval

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Mr. Sipiwe Eric Mthiyane (Supervisor)

March 2013

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The staff members at my school who shared most of the critical responsibilities to allow me time to compile the study after school.

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to all those who believed in me when I was down and had no faith that I would ever rise again.

Your prayers, your words of exhortation the positive prophecies and your exposing the hidden potential in me has opened new vistas in my life. Be mightily blessed.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This investigative study focused on challenges experienced by novice principals in executing their mandated leadership and management duties. A case study was conducted on four novice principals in the Pinetown District. Two headed a rural primary and high school respectively and the other two, an urban primary and high school respectively. The study investigated challenges experienced by novice principals, how they coped with these challenges and how they enacted themselves as assets to their schools. This qualitative study was located in the interpretive paradigm. Documents review, observations and semi-structured interviews constitute the research instruments for data generation. The study was framed by the distributive theory and the asset-based approach. Local and international scholastic works, on the research topic, were interrogated to seek insights into the progress so far made and determine the agenda to be explored. The analysis and discussion of the generated and presented data led to findings that demystified the world of novice principals. Clearly, they require pre-service induction or orientation, mentoring and coaching should accompany the in-service workshops for contextualisation of the theory learnt and informal networking to glean from the experience of peers. Higher stakeholder involvement and learning should be enhanced through the adoption of distributive leadership and the asset-based approach.

The findings were utilised as the basis of making conclusions. It was concluded that capacity building initiatives are key to development even if novice principals are appropriately qualified, possessed accumulated experiences in leadership position as the Head of Department or Deputy principal and prior knowledge. It was also concluded that for the effective and efficient entrenchment of the DoE's legislated vision and direction of the democratic system of education, leadership should be shared or distributed. Individual capabilities should be determined and employed in the asset-based approach. Recommendations, informed by the conclusions were presented to facilitate how each theoretical conclusion can be translated into a workable practice in running schools effectively and efficiently.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction and background**

This chapter is designed to give a bird's eye view of the entire research project. Initially, it reflects on the background and the nature of the researched problem. This is followed by a brief outline on the focus and context of the research study. The purpose, rationale, significance and the key research questions are complimentary in foregrounding the necessity of undertaking this project. Terms adopted to narrate the study, are then explained for mutual communicative purposes. Literature reviewed, theoretical frameworks and the research design and methodology indicate the body of knowledge which undergirds the research topic and process. An abridged presentation of the limitations to the study and how the succeeding chapters are organized form the penultimate component of this chapter. A general overall summary concludes what has been discussed throughout this chapter.

Thurlow (2003, p.78) states that “since 1994 the National Department of Education (NDE) has refocused the vision and direction of the South African education system through policies, initiatives and innovations”. Bhengu (2005) foregrounds that these initiatives, policies and innovations are meant to be a transformative decentralization of the apartheid education system into a democratic system of education with self-sustaining schools. Central to this transformation is a shift towards an equitable redistribution of available resources. As a sequence, a commensurable increase in the nature of the scope and scale of the mandated leadership and management duties, of novice principals, (in particular as the research subjects), emerged from these educational transformations. Novice principals are, thus, catapulted into key agents of educational change, tasked with ensuring that the legislated vision and direction of the democratic system of education is realized within their schools.

Brundrett, Fitzgerald and Sommefeldt (2006, p.89) note that “the single largest change is the introduction of the school or site-based leadership and management linked to an increasing

accountability and leading novice principals to being positioned as the *public face* of their schools: By implication,

“profound changes in the culture and practice of schools. The extent to which the schools are able to make the necessary changes will depend largely on the nature and quality of their internal management” (Department of Education, 2006, p.28).

The South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996 (SASA) places schools firmly on the road to a school-based system of educational leadership and management that demands that schools must increasingly come to manage themselves. However, Bush, Bisschoff, Glover, Heystek, Joubert and Moloi (2006, p.13) systematic literature review for the Goniwe school of Leadership and Governance concluded that “most of the novice principals have never received adequate specialist preparation for their leadership and management roles”. Moreover, Crow (2006, p.35) notes “the contribution of technological and demographic change to the complexity affecting novice principals”. He comments that these changes also impact on the nature of any leadership preparation. Consequently, “without effective preparation many novice principals “*flounder*” as they attempt to juggle the conflicting demands of their posts” (Sackney & Walker, 2006, p.343). This research project is silhouetted against this background of novice principals being “thrown in the deep end without a life-line” (Pheko, 2008, p.76). The research seek to explore the challenges of leadership and management novice principals face and how they learn to lead and manage their schools, given this background.

## **1.2. The nature of the problem**

The Department of Education’s (DoE) legislative policies tend to underestimate the importance of preparing or capacitating novice principals for their new roles and responsibilities during the entry phase of their careers (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2011). Morford (2002) argues that novice principals, during this phase, struggle to understand how are they supposed to act, what are they suppose to know and what are they supposed to do, without help. Expecting them to cope with such demands without specific systematic preparations “is a recipe for a personal stress and educational system failure” (Bush & Heystek, 2006, p.298). This is the heart of the nature of the problem faced by novice principals without capacitation.

Aiken (2002, p.2) points out that “every school is a unique organization with its own history, space and casts of characters”. The DoE’s legislated democratic policies were not formulated to cater for the diverse school environments i.e. they epitomise a one size fits all nature (Bush, *et al.*, 2006) .The policy frameworks guiding the appointment of new principals reflects that, in South Africa, although novice principals are qualified for their jobs in terms of the government expectations, they require further training to cope with the new tasks that they are expected to face as educational managers (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2011). The latest Human Resource Management Circular No 48 stipulates that a minimum of a three year post matriculation (REQV 13), inclusive of a professional teaching qualification, is the basic educational qualification required for promotion to principalship. Furthermore, a mere minimum of years in terms of service experience in the continuous employment of the Department of Education, is sufficient to becoming a newly –promoted principals (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Educational, 2012). Consequently, an educator who has occupied a formal leadership and management position at a school is eligible to apply and be appointed to principalship provided he/ she is awarded the highest points during the interview process, Mathibe (2007), comments that such minimal entry requirements are equivalent to placing school administration, management, leadership and governance in the hands of ‘technically’ under-prepared or unqualified novice principals.

Mestry and Grobler (2004); Bush and Oduro (2006); Steyn (2006) and Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2011), after researching on newly-promoted principals, have identified many new tasks which these principals face. The list incorporates complying with a plethora of ever-changing legislation, regulations and policies, establishing or restoring a culture of teaching and learning, improving and maintaining high educational standards, collaborating with parents, dealing with a multicultural school populations, coping with limited resources, ensuring more accountability to their respective communities and coping with factors outside schools that may impinge on their jurisdiction. Oduro (2003) comments that one research subject responded as follows:

I was appointed all of a sudden to be the principal, which I was not expecting. I didn’t know keeping financial records or preparing for auditing was part of the principal’s job.

This is indicative of the help novice principals need to efficiently and effectively run their schools after being promoted.

Moreover, the democratic education system, in contrast to the apartheid system, is market-driven. By implication, the pressure is on newly promoted principals to produce learners with entrepreneurial skills to cope with the demands of the market beyond school life. The democratic system of education expects schools to equip students to be lifelong and self-sustaining learners. It is in the context of the many new tasks and the demands of the democratic education system that capacity building initiatives would facilitate the meaningful addressing of all these variables and enhance developing effective coping skills when dealing with the duties at hand.

### **1.3. The focus and context of the study**

Avolio (2008, p.21) makes a compelling case for leadership development based on the view that leaders are ‘made not born’. Those who appear to have ‘natural leadership qualities’ acquire them through a learning process, leading, and not ‘leadership fixed at birth’. This leads to the view that systematic preparation, rather than inadvertent experience, is more likely to produce effective leaders. However, Naledi Pandor (2006), the former Minister of National Education, foregrounds that novice principals, notably, “cannot analyse, solve problems, devise strategic interventions and plans, formulate programmes that are directed at successfully running schools” (Business Day, 10 September, 2006). Furthermore, Ramphela (2007, p.25) notes that “attempts by the DoE to transform the grossly inequitable and inadequate school education system is characterized by a failure to translate good policies into sound practices”. Pandor’s (2006) statement portrays novice principals as grappling with leadership and management challenges. Ramphela’s (2007) comments suggest that a gap exists between good policies and sound practices. Both statements indicate a need for orchestrated capacity building initiatives to equip novice principals for their mandate roles and responsibilities. However, Bush, Glover and Harris (2007) have an alternative perspective on school leadership and management development as informed by the demands of the current democratic education system. Their view is premised on the distinction between leadership and management provided by Burgoyne and Williams (2007, p.3) that “.....leadership is more to do with the visionary, creative, motivational and inspirational aspect of organising, whereas managing is more to do with the effective operation

of useful routines (initiatives)". By implication, leadership incorporates the inherent affective attributes of the novice principal, while management is enhanced through capacity building initiatives or useful routines. Combining Pandor's and Ramphela's statements and Bush, *et.al.* (2007) view it can be deducted that the development of novice principals requires the blending of orchestrated capacity building activities and the incidental stimulus of inherent affective attributes, Bush, *et.al.* (2007) advocate that this wholesome development of novice principals produces a leading and managing of schools that is emergent rather than prescriptive, process-rich rather than content-led. They argue that depth rather than scale is achieved through this interplay between incidental and orchestrated initiatives and innovations in the wholesome development of novice principals.

The Burgoyne and William's (2007) distinction between leadership and management provides a bedrock on which to introduce the asset-based and distributed leadership approach to leading and managing schools by novice principals. The visionary, creative, motivational and inspirational aspects mentioned in that distinction (the affective nature) are springboards of introducing the theoretical frameworks adopted for this research study. The asset-based approach is premised on recognising the inherent strengths of the human resource and all the site-based assets, tapping into these towards achieving intended goals. The distributive approach to leadership facilitates learning opportunities for all members at the school site. Therefore, this provide a fertile ground all-round work-based deliberate capacity building and shared leadership for novice principals.

Given the paramount importance of leadership and management duties in facilitating the implementation of the vision and direction of the democratic education system, more attention should be given to the world of novice principals by researchers and academics. This importance also provided the incentive towards focusing the context of this research study.

Bennet (2003) portrays the context in which novice principals operate as highly demanding, complex and multidimensional. They lead and manage in "a new world marked by unprecedented responsibilities, problems and roles" (Hess & Kelly, 2005, p.1). They must work in close association with all relevant stakeholders to attain the National Education vision democratically (Bush, 2007). This entails developing skills that embody the ability to modify the



DoE policies to implementable practices compatible with the school vision interactively with all the relevant stakeholders. It is in this context that novice principals are expected to evolve tactical skills of putting into practice the new democratic policies and initiatives without being developed. The context demands that they generate strategies that involve eliciting compliant participation from all school stakeholders in the democratic transformation process (Dinham, 2008). Failure to negotiate a balance between tactical and strategic skills equates to failure to translating the theoretical knowledge of the democratic initiatives into practice that would catalyzed the desired transformation in their schools, Novice principals operate in this context without or with limited building programmes.

#### **1.4 The purpose and rationale**

Hall (2005) explains that novice principals are expected to be community relations directors, medical supervisors, marketers, enforcers of policies, laws and regulations with all the attendant disciplinary measures, fundraisers, democratic instructional leaders with skills for distributing leadership. Therefore, primarily, the purpose for undertaking this research is to explore, from the novice principals' perspectives, the challenges they experience in the process of doing their leadership and management functions without any prior formal capacitating. Secondly, the project seeks to determine to what extent do contextual variables at the school site impact this learning process i.e. how do they deal with these challenges.

Bush and Oduro (2006, p.362) note that “novice principals are often appointed on the basis of a successful record as teachers with an implicit assumption that this provides a sufficient starting point for their leadership and management duties”. The transition involving the relinquishing the comfort and confidence of the well known teachers' roles and responsibilities to experiencing the discomfort and uncertainty of the unfamiliar territory of being novice principals, is not taken into cognisance (Ferrigno, 2003). Sometimes expectations at school grassroots' level are divergent or even in direct conflict with the DoE expectations as expressed in the relevant policies and regulations. Without preparation, this is tantamount to a 'sink or swim' prospect for novice principals. It can be assumed that at a personal level, novice principal learn to perform their duties by trial and error.

Levine (2005, p.10) foregrounds that novice principals, professionally, are expected to learn to “rethink goals, financial management, staffing, acquisition of learning resources, assessment methods, technology, the use of time and space”. They are the educational capillaries of the democratic system of education to their schools. Therefore, the vision and direction of the Department of the National Education Department is, to a large degree, dependent on the effective and efficient execution of their leadership and management duties. It seems rational and logical to prepare them thoroughly for their duties as they are the pivotal fulcrum of the democratic educational change.

Novice principals, at a conceptual level, are expected to deal with the concepts of leadership and management. Derek and Malcom (2003,p.33) indicate that “there is no clear, agreed upon definition that captures the leadership or management concepts because there are almost as many definitions of these concepts as there are people who have attempted to capture their essence”. Some regard these concepts as identical, some discern the functional overlap and some view them as totally different. Novice principals, the leaders and managers in their schools, are expected to conceptualize and implement both. It is rational to determine how do they accomplish this feat given the background which is deplete of preparatory programmes.

It has been noted by Bush and Oduro (2006) that the empirical research on the socialisation of novice principals is scarce. More specifically, there is little research that speaks directly to the experiences of principals during the first years of their tenure. One such research was conducted by Chetty (2001) titled The Novice Primary School Principal: “Are You Managing?”. The study focused on the procedures involved in appointing principals, the roles of the School Governing Bodies in this process and its irrelevance to the tasks awaiting the newly-promoted principals. The research I undertook looks at the experiences of novice principals when enacting their mandated duties. It also takes into cognisance how they can be capacitated to be more efficient and effective in promoting productive school functionality at primary and high school levels.

### **1.5. The critical research questions**

The following key research questions have been formulated as a framework that focuses the research project on the research problem:

- ❖ What are the leadership and management challenges faced by the novice principals?
- ❖ What are the opportunities of expressing their inherent leadership and management attributes when executing their mandated duties?
- ❖ How do novice principals learn to deal with the leadership and management challenges/opportunities in performing their professional roles and responsibilities?
- ❖ How do novice principals enact themselves as assets for their schools and the Department of Education?

### **1.6. The significance of the study**

Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2001) write that preparation and capacity building initiatives for novice principals are about transformation. Novice principals are socialised to a leadership and management culture from a predominantly teaching base through this transformation. The socialization is a transitional phase that demands that novice principals deal with multiple and simultaneous leadership and management challenges. The challenges embrace fluid changes that embody learning new skills, concepts, language and roles of being principals. This requires processing the accelerated and expanded information that is constantly evolving to ensure an up-to-date functioning of the school. Findings on what actually transpires during this phase of a novice principal's life is very significant for catalyzing the fostering of the vision and direction of the democratic education system.

Any research study has the potential of filling the gap in the existing body of knowledge on a particular subject. This usually happens when ground breaking data is collected during the process of researching. In addition, an alternative perspective may emerge during the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). This research project is significant with regards to potential findings and probable recommendations, especially with respect to capacity building programmes for novice principals.

Findings from the research project may significantly correlate the absence or limitedness of preparatory exercises for novice principals to the high stress levels, burnouts and marked exodus to the other public sectors of novice principals.

## **1.7 Key concepts**

In order to facilitate a common understanding, broad definitions of key terms used in the study are provided below:

### **Novice principals**

Novice principals are principals who have been newly promoted and lack experience on the job situation. Their tenure on the job ranges from the day of assumption to three years (Daresh, 2001).

### **Leadership**

Leadership is the ability to exert a positive influence over other people, to inspire and motivate them towards a vision, emotionally supporting and directing their activities towards achieving organizational goals (Flores, 2004).

### **Management**

Management is a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilisation of organisational resources in order to achieve organisational goals. While management often exhibits leadership skills, its overall functions is the maintenance of existing organisational policies and legislative documents (Bush, 2007).

### **The Asset-Based Approach**

The asset-based approach is a set of methods for organisational mobilisation, a strategy for organisation-based strengthening bedrocked on a process of internal capacity maximisation for all stakeholders in the organisation (Eberson & Eloff, 2006)

### **Distributed leadership**

Distributed leadership is a devolved, shared or dispersed style of leading. It is participative collaborative and democratic. It results from multiple interactions of leadership practices in the school at different points of the organisation (Spillane, 2006).

### **1.8. Review of literature**

Research works, on the subject of challenges experienced by novice principals, pertaining to leadership and management duties, will be informed in the literature to be reviewed. The focus of reviewing literature by various scholars, academics and related sources will be on:

- ❖ Challenges encountered by novice principals on being newly promoted without any preparatory programmes;
- ❖ The impact of these programmes on the introductory years of principalship when available;
- ❖ The role played by the contextual variables when novice principals negotiate their way through the transition phase from a teaching base to leadership and management.
- ❖ How do novice principals enact themselves as assets for their schools and the Department of Education?

### **1.9. Theoretical frameworks**

The democratic education system embodies interactive, collaborative and collective decision making. As a sequence, current school leadership demands that schools be transformed into laboratories of democracy (Bush, 2008). It is assumed, in this study, that transformational leadership is the bedrock of all the transformative practices of the democratic education system. It, thus, undergirds the theories adopted to frame this research project.

The distributed leadership theory and the asset-based approach have been selected as the best fit theoretical frameworks for undertaking this study. The distributed leadership theory allows for spreading school influence and decision making that is governed by interactions among the human structures than the individual novice principal. Hence, the novice principal is enabled to learn from others, learn from their mandated duties and learn with others (Frost, 2008). The theory favours “leadership determined by purpose rather than by rank” (Jackson & Temperley, 2007, p.60). This is in line with the precepts of democracy in the democratic education system, where leadership has shifted from hierarchial to more distributed or shared forms to cultivate the capacity of those serving within the schools. The theory is thus about empowering the school human resource to generate workplace agendas in dealing with the change forces confronting schools in the current democratic dispensation. Through the theory the development of a

powerful relationship between vertical and literal leadership processes is rapidly catalysed (Caldwell, 2006).

The theory resonates favourably with the asset-based approach. The asset-based approach rests on the principle of recognizing the strengths and assets of the school human resource, mobilizing and maximizing these towards achieving the intended goals of the individual organisation/ community ( Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006). Central to the approach is a distributed association of all members, both formally and informally, informed by their capacities, abilities and skills as a development strategy ( Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2012). An appreciative construction that sees members as having within themselves the capacity to enrich and enhance the democratic quality of life within the schools evolves by implementing the asset-based approach. The distributed leadership theory coupled with the asset-base approach seemed the best fit theories to frame this study for the aforestated reasons.

## **1.10. Research design and methodology**

### **1.10.1 Methodological approach**

The research project is located in the qualitative paradigm due to its descriptive and interpretive nature. Maree (2007, p.55) views the descriptive and interpretive nature of this paradigm as “an attempt to see how others have constructed their reality by asking them about it”. He then further explains that “these personal experiences, beliefs and value-ladered accounts or perceptions of reality are biased and subjective but in qualitative research they are accepted as true for those who have lived through them”.

The case study design has been adopted to underpin this research process. Yin (2004) states that the case study is an empirical investigation or exploration of a temporary situation within its real life context, when boundaries between context and the phenomenon are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2006, p.264) add that this methodology is “an attempt to understand participants’ perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation, concept or phenomenon”.

### **1.10.2. Sampling**

Purposive sampling has been selected to undertake a case study of four schools: two urban and two rural schools. Purposive sampling was selected because it allows the researcher to handpick members to be included in the sample on the basis of a particular sought after characteristic. Novice principals, from their lived experiences, possess in-depth knowledge to appropriately respond to the critical key research questions (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2005).

### **1.10.3. Methods and techniques**

Triangulation of semi-structured interviews, document analysis and ‘shadowing’ observation will be utilized to collect the required data from novice principals. Triangulation of instruments serves to verify and validate the collected data. The higher the degree of collaboration of data collected by various instruments, the greater is the degree of trustworthiness of the research work (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008).

### **1.10.4 Data analysis**

The collected data will be analysed through content analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). Constant comparison of the newly acquired data with pre-existing data on issues being discussed, informed by the research questions will spearhead the content analysis. This will be employed to establish correspondence, refute previous arguments on the evidence of the new data and create a new body of knowledge on that particular issue. Inductive analysis will be applied to scan the collected data, to generate categories of phenomena, seeking relationships between these categories and writing summaries and classifications on the basis of the examined data.

### **1.10.5. Ethical issues**

The ethical clearance certificate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal forms the primary assurance of the ethical soundness of this research project. An application for permission to involve schools was forward to the Provincial Department of Education. And a positive response obtained to proceed with the research project. Participant novice principals were then visited on a personal basis to introduce myself and explain the nature of the study. Anonymity of their schools was addressed through using pseudonyms for each participant. Confidentiality of collected data was also guaranteed verbally and in written form. Mutual consent for recording

any collected data was be sought and granted prior to the actual research. All the participants were be informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at their own discretion at any given time. The personal visits was then succeeded by a formal written invitation that re-iterated all the above stated ethical considerations and also provide contact details of my supervisor. Their written responses were kept for records and as part of the continuing process of researching.

### **1.11. Limitations to the study**

Since principals will be expressing personal accounts during the interviews, the foremost limitation to the trustworthiness of collected data was the degree of subjectivity (Maree, 2007). To reduce the level of subjectivity it was explained to the principals that it is not their performance that it being appraised but a confidential exploration on difficulties encountered in the line of duty. A pilot study to two novice principals was scheduled and undertaken prior to the actual research process. The pilot study facilitated the curbing of ambiguity in interview questions, standard of language used, duration of interviews and appropriateness of questions in terms of sequence and focus on the required data. All these limiting factors were be addressed through piloting the interview schedule. Novice principals were allowed free access to the collected data to eliminate subjective interpretation from the researcher's perspective. In this manner, the limitations of the researcher's subjectivity were also reduced.

### **1.12. Organisation of study**

Chapter One is an orientation to the research project and covers synoptic aspects of the study. Thus, it gives an overview of what can be expected in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two focuses on what continental and international research literature reveals on the subject of novice principals. The chapter reflects on programmes that have been implemented in other countries to help novice principals during the entry years of their careers. Finally, the theoretical frameworks on which the study is based is fully explained in this chapter.

Chapter Three presents the research design and methodology in which the study is located. It provides the instruments selected for eliciting the research data from participating principals. An explanation of how the sample was chosen and the piloting of the interview questions is part of



this chapter. The actual research process, with all the ethical considerations involved, is key to the degree of trustworthiness of this study as it is in the actual research process whereby all limiting factors are addressed and reduced or eliminated.

Chapter Four focuses on presenting the data collected through semi-structured interviews, observations and documents reviewed. The lenses of key research questions, the literature reviewed and the adopted theoretical frameworks are utilised to screen and analyse the presented data. Findings, based on this analysis, lead to emergent, themes, inferences and deductions.

Chapter Five presented a reflective summary on each chapter of the entire research project. The findings determined from analysing the presented data in chapter inform on conclusions which are made in this chapter. Each conclusion is complimented with a recommendation. It can then be deduced from these conclusions and recommendation the degree to which the knowledge generated can be generalised.

### **1.13. Chapter summary**

This chapter is mainly an orientation to the rest of the study. A real life researchable problem was expressed in the background, context and focus, significance and purpose of the study. This real life problem, involving novice principals, was then translated into key researchable questions. How the research process unfolded is covered by the other components of the chapter. The purpose of outlining all aspects which are an integral feature of the study is to give meaning and direction of the research project. The contents this chapter serves as reference or a point of departure for the succeeding research process.

The next chapter is dedicated to the literature review and theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. The literature review, drawn from a diverse spectrum of research works, expands on elements of the synoptic overview expressed in this chapter. A detailed explanation of the theoretical frameworks adopted for the study and the reason for the adoption are also fully discussed in chapter two of this research study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The synoptic overview of the entire research study was presented in the preceding chapter. Literature that speaks to the research topic, from diverse scholastic works, as well as theories that frame the research project were also briefly discussed in the chapter one. A detailed written discourse on these phenomena in this chapter.

Becoming a novice principal is, arguably, the greatest step-change in the career of a school leader (Leithwood, 2007). Consequently it becomes imperative to study and explore their introductory experiences as leaders and managers of their schools. Although the professional growth of school leaders continues to attract international interest, demystifying leadership learning remains open to further exploration (Brundrett & Crawford, 2008). Bush and Glover (2009) acknowledge that literature on school leadership is awash with unsubstantiated claims about what school leaders should learn given the current importance of learning to lead. Yet, there is a dearth of empirical evidence about the kind of leadership learning that can be regarded as effective, even less written about how leadership learning works, how leaders learn and can learn (Patterson & West-Burnham, 2005). Leadership practices have not featured prominently in scholastic works on school leadership (Grint, 2007). Scholars have concerned themselves mostly with leadership structures, roles, routines and arrangements. Notwithstanding “the systematic reform process that seeks to develop new democratic values, beliefs and norms, involving building new conceptions about leadership activities in schools” (Gronn, 2003,p.54), newly promoted principals grapple with the daunting task of reculturing their schools to democratic practices.

Furthermore, Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) note that there exist a tension on the job for novice principals. This tension emanates from the mandated expectations about school leadership embodied in the national legislative documents, expectations embodied in school policies, priorities as well as expectations and aspirations of the individual newly-promoted incumbents themselves. Busher (2008) identifies this tension as professional and organizational socialisation. Professional socialisation embraces preparatory activities designed to equip novice principals for

their occupational roles and functions, for example, induction or orientation (pre-service initiatives). In contrast, organisational socialisation embodies activities based on the specific contexts where the mandated duties and roles are performed, i.e. work-based programmes like networking and mentoring (in-service initiatives). The tension is exacerbated by the absence of initiatives meant to initiate the new principals into and through the socialisation process. The trial and error decision making, action taking based on intuition, common sense, previously acquired experiences, rational reasoning and a fairly strong conviction about what constitutes good and ethical practices, prevails (Stoll & Louis, 2007). How novice principals evolve strategies to counteract the growing disenchantment with this leadership tension that has been reported in other studies by Hargreaves and Fink (2006), is also explored in this project.

Over the past decade research on school principals (including newly promoted principals) around the world has shown that quality leadership in a school contributes to improved learner performance and teaching effectiveness (Reppa & Lazaridou, 2008). This chapter “turns to the local and international research community and seeks insights into the progress so far made and the agenda to be explored” (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009, p.364). The theoretical frameworks constitutes a discourse that links theory to practice from the literature reviewed. Pegg (2007, p. 265) suggests that:

understanding how educational leadership learn and how they can be best supported to continue learning in the workplace requires that educational researchers pay particular attention to the way that leaders connect theories learnt through training programmes to practice.

A summary, comprised of the salient points from the reviewed literature, concludes this chapter.

## **2.2. The paradox of the introductory years to principalship: Are they deficiency-based challenges or asset-based opportunities?**

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) states that the local school initiation of change events, the steerage of the change process and sustaining the improvements, is globally linked to school

leadership. However, school leadership, though with an international reach, has many blind spots, uncertainties and under-researched areas. As a sequence, engagement with leadership development, may be approached either opportunistically or strategically. The former is informed by the elements of the innate self required for leadership to be successfully learned. The latter makes a case for systematic leadership training programmes as external interventions to learning effective leadership practices. Hence, it may be assumed that the most powerful ‘professional infancy learning’ for newly promoted principals may occur either incidentally or by an on-the-job orchestration (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Possibly, through combining both. This reminds one that one man’s meat is another man’s poison in the context of opportunity versus challenge respectively.

### **2.2.1. Principalship as an opportunity**

Zaccaro (2007) foregrounds that some researchers point to a growing empirical base indicating that an individual’s attributes and traits can be important precursors of leadership and attribute maximally to leadership emergence. This perspective weighs heavily in favour of evolving and conceptualising the leadership practices from purposeful intrinsic engagement learning processes. Crawford (2009, p.55), reflecting on this as the emotional intelligence of school leaders, writes:

leadership is much more an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do. The visible signs (outward expression of the innate quality) of artful leadership are expressed, ultimately, in its practices.

By implication, it is the conceived perception of leadership that gives birth to practices of leadership as an expression of the innate self. The innate assets of the novice principals enable him/her to overcome personal and professional difficulties and overturn deeply rooted perceptions of the difficulties associated with being a novice principal (Crow, Lumby & Pashiardis, 2008). Leithwood (2005) notes that internally generated learning catalyses rapid resourcefulness, improvisation and mental agility in the face of introductory school leadership problems which are augmented by a large number of global education realities defined by the legislative and policy frameworks mandating what schools do around the world.

Hargreaves (2003, p.142) presents the argument from the perspectives of questioning the efficacy of externally introduced capacity developing programmes. He postulates that “novice principals, inducted into performance training initiatives, tend to lose their capacity or desire to make professional leadership judgments, becoming more reflective over time”. Fullan (2003) reasons that dependency on externally formulated workshops robs the novice principal of taking the initiative and progressively tailoring the national education legislations and policies to the individual needs of their school. He foregrounds that innately developed or learned leadership motivates the newly promoted principals to be avid readers of global social, economic and educational trends in order to enable them to interpret where and how school energies should be deployed. Bush (2008) complements Fullan’s statement by expressing that it is yet to be seen if the national leadership training initiatives produce more proficient novice principals. Informed by these arguments Macbeath, Gray, Cullen, Frost, Steward and Swaffield (2007) may be correct in deducting that prescribing what and how for newly promoted principals is counterproductive given the widely differing contexts. Let each maximize his/her innate leadership potential through learning experiences afforded by the opportunity of becoming a new principal.

### **2.2.2. The leadership and management challenges of novice principals**

The tremendous paradigm shift fostered by reforms in education systems “portrays changes from bureaucratic education systems, with traditional views that focused on rules and procedures rather than collaboration, teamwork and shared decision making” (Tekleselassie, 2002, p.61). Mulford and Silins (2003) contend that reforms for schools, no matter how well conceptualized, powerfully sponsored and closely audited tend to fail if key change implementers are not capacitated. Democratic education reforms “cast novice principals as buffers in many situations, absorbing pressures stemming from teachers, parents, supervisors and the contextual variables in the school environment”(Slater, Garcia & Gorosave, 2006,p.754). Gronn (2007) acknowledges that bearing the individual burden of responsibility for all that happens within a school is one of the explicit reasons for the reluctance among teachers to assume the mantle of principalship. Nor is it only carrying responsibility for the internal workings of their schools but also being held accountable for factors that lie well beyond their control (Frost, 2008). These perceived realities

during the formative years of novice principals, pose as challenges to staggering problems for which they are not usually prepared hence requiring relevant external interventions.

Leithwood and Reihl (2003) argue that leadership is not a phenomenon that has any real meaning until it is attached to a particular context and until it is directed to a particular purpose with particular people. Novice principals mobilize and work with the human agency to articulate and achieve shared intentions and the national education vision. Thus, they are continuously challenged with the necessity of convincing others to see the reason for democratic change, deal with it, manage it, where necessary, actively take charge of it in process of performing their duties (Gronn, 2003). As a sequence, Crow (2006) insists that preparation of novice principals is essential because their subsequent leadership practices profoundly impact on stakeholders requirements and expectations. Hargreaves and Fink (2006, p.57) foreground that:

leadership learning is not a destination with fixed co-ordinate on a compass, but a journey with a plenty of detours and even some dead ends. Effective novice principals are continuously open to new learning because the journey keeps changing. Their maps are complex and can be confusing. What novices require for this journey is a set of interrelated learnings that treat school leadership in a holistic rather than a reductionist way. The learning can be deepened and elaborated, nurtured, abandoned and connected and related other learnings as the journey progresses.

In other words, external interventions as an integral component of these learnings, are a necessity to overcome the challenges of the journey and chart the transition course for newly promoted principals' formative years.

### **2.2.3. The integrated perspective: An interplay between incidental and orchestrated capacity building initiative**

Olivares, Peterson and Hess (2007) propose an integrated holistic approach to novice principal development. Their perspective is encapsulated as follows:

Leadership development, as type of human development, takes place over time. It is incremental in nature; it is accretive, and it is the result of complex reciprocal

interactions between the leaders, others and the social environment. Thus, effective leadership development realizes that leaders develop and function within a social context, and although individual- based development is necessary for leadership, it is not sufficient. Leadership requires that individual intrinsic development be integrated and understood in the context of others, social systems organizational strategies (capacity building initiative), mission and goals.

Gray and Bishop (2009) write that there must be opportunities in leadership learning or development to solve a range of school problems, first through observing, participating and the actually leading teams. As much as Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2007) contend for personal traits in leadership effectiveness, it is the interplay between the inherent assets within the human agency in a specific context that maximizes the potential for leadership capacity. External interventions simply catalyses a more rapid professional growth. They also provides the frameworks to identify the role conceptualisation, initial socialisation, role identify and purposeful engagements with all relevant stakeholders during the transition to experienced principalship. Thus incidental or orchestrated, opportunistic or strategic capacity building processes are complimentary rather than competitive.

### **2.3 Literature on leadership development**

Mulford (2003, p.1025) notes that the context of educational leadership development has been pictured as “involving large scales, if not global cultural, technological, economic and political forces of change”. Viewed from this angle, the role of novice principals, in particular, is “seen as one of increasing change, complexity, diversity and intensity” (p. 1025). The pressure from this change, both in terms of excellence and equity, under the influences of national and international standardised educational priorities, is increasing (Dinham, 2008). The transition journey of novice principals is seen as involving the development of appropriate skills, knowledge and wisdom over time so that the complexity and diversity of national, regional and local education contexts can be addressed (Rhodes & Brundett, 2009).

Anderson, Gronn, Ingvarson, Jackson, Kleinhenz and McKenzie (2007, p.13) point out that the key global challenge is to “identify the elements that are essential in the preparation of novice

principals, including the capacity to take on a broad range of responsibilities and facilitate shared leadership, the relationship between leadership and student' outcomes. The leadership literature is generally so unquestioning of leadership and managerial assumptions that attempting to extract leadership as a conceptual category of higher calling is a lost cause". Thrupp (2005) notes that existing studies on capacity building initiatives are often fragmented, lack a theoretical and empirical foundation and pay little attention to practice. Furthermore, large gaps exist on information related to urban and rural, developed and undeveloped regions (Chu & Fu, 2011). In a nutshell, Ng (2006) states that one of the pervasive challenges inherent to global educational reform is connecting policy intentions to implementation strategies.

National programmes to prepare novice leaders for schools have been adopted in some countries. Such programmes cannot be divorced from leadership learning in school and in other contexts. These countries have realised that fostering successful transition to leadership and leadership actions may help in avoiding the unnecessary derailment of the national educational vision and direction. Capacity building initiatives generated in the United Kingdom (UK), Australia and United States of America (USA) are representative of the developed countries' response to the leadership and management challenge of novice principals.

### **2.3.1. The National College for School Leadership: The prominent development initiative in United Kingdom (UK)**

Thrupp (2005) writes that the NCSL was established to ensure that the school leaders develop the skills, the capability and capacity to lead and transform the school education system in the UK. The major challenge to be addressed was that novice principals especially, got to grips with their duties the hard way- "by learning from mistakes" (Bright & Ware, 2003, p.13). The NCSL asked "what does the international knowledge base tells us about effective provision for novice principals?". Studies by Hartley and Hinksman (2003, p.13) found that effective provision entailed "not a single activity but a set of activities, often taking place over many years". This study focuses only on the emergent or the newly promoted principals' stage although five stage of leadership development were formulated.

The emergent stage of leadership development features "learning on the job and context of the workplace" (Hallinger & Kamontip, 2005, pp.7-9). They argue that "in an age of chaotic change,



novice principals need to develop their affective, as well as cognitive capacities to lead”. They urge that problem-based learning incorporating coaching and support to help new leaders apply new ideas and skills, be encouraged. Bush, Glover, Bischoff, Moloi, Heystek and Joubert (2006) warn that raw experience is not sufficient guide to equipping novice principals. They need help in structuring and analysing for learning. Carefully prepared, clearly structured and purposeful initiatives need to be designed to support newly-promoted principals in identifying and addressing their developmental needs and their desired pathway of learning (NCSL, 2007c).

Hartley and Hinksman (2003) state that without informal learning and professional development, the conception of emergent leadership implies the ability to live with uncertainty, learning from mistakes, mental agility, adaptability, preparedness to distribute leadership to work across boundaries and build trusting relationship. “Leadership is seen here as embedded in relationship, context and task performance and operating in conditions of complexity and ambiguity” (Glatter, 2004, p.215). Higher order capacities such as ‘reading the situation’, ‘balanced judgment’, ‘intuition tested against stored memory and ordered experience’ and ‘political acumen’ require customised capacity building initiatives (Hallinger & Kamontip, 2005, pp.15-16). McKinsey and Company (2007) argue that greater customisation gives novice principals a more active involvement in choosing their learning pathways. Burgoyne and Williams (2007) propose four main areas to capacitate new principals for their development.

They start with ‘*the knowing that*’ area. Cognition, receiving information, transmission of facts and gaining understanding of theories characterises this area. Pre-service and induction activities feature within this area. Induction is the systematic school-based process intended to minimise the problems confronting novice principals so that they can contribute maximally to the development of their school and at the same time realise personal and professional satisfaction (NCSL, 2006). It catalyses learning to initiate change and to implement it effectively. It is the basis for relevant evolution of change based on an appropriate balance between change and stability, control and flexibility (Leithwood, *et.al*, 2007).

The second area, ‘*the knowing how*’ involves skills development, tools and techniques for newly promoted principals. The most valued activities in this area are networking and mentoring, either

through face to face events or purposeful school visits (Bush, *et.al*, 2007). Mentoring is an interactive process between two peers, sometimes differing in experience and expertise, and is mutually beneficial in developing those involved career-wise, educationally or in the process of socialisation within the school (Makanya, 2005). It allows for a platform for discussions on work related issues. PricewaterCoopers (2007, p.24) comments that mentoring nurtures “the softer skills informed by interpersonal relationships which produce maturity of judgment sometimes called wisdom”. Furthermore, although not purely analytical or intuitive, conveys the “ability to deliberate about issues and problems reflectively” (Bush, *et.al*. 2007,p.30) foregrounds that “mentoring shows longer term benefits although it requires thorough training, careful matching, adequate time and integration into the wider learning process”. Huxham and Vangen (2005) add that networking extends and enlarges the potential of adopting innovative practices enormously. Networking increases the pool of ideas on which any member can draw. This is because networking increase the pool of ideas on which any member can draw.

Behavioural change i.e. doing things differently and attitude change, namely, feeling differently towards the job, comprise ‘*the third and fourth*’ main areas. In these areas external intervention, in the form of coaching, is pivotal to the nurturing and developing of the novice principal.

Creasey and Paterson (2005, p.9) state that “mentoring activities focus upon the individuals professional role often as they move into new roles and take new responsibilities”. In contrast, Tolhurst (2006) foregrounds that coaching is based on the belief that people are full of potential and their own answers lie inside them. The job of the coach, through the coaching process, is to unlock the potential and those answers. Therefore the focus of coaching is the in- depth development of specific, knowledge skills and strategies. In the NCSL (2007) school visits to the novice principals provide the mechanism through which this coaching is facilitated. The novice principal and the coach work together in partnership of equals in an integrated approach of addressing incidental and orchestrated, opportunistic and strategic, leadership development.

Lee (2007, p.7) enthuses on coaching as follows:

Coaching is arguably the most powerful method of developing capacity for leadership. If emergent leadership is to be truly effective, novice principals must be authentic, the capacity building initiatives must be grounded in self-awareness,

confidence and creativity. The development of such qualities demands that newly promoted principals develop their self-understanding.

Tolhurst(2006,p.2) echoes this sentiment as follows: “coaching is now at the heart of many leadership programmes coming from the NCSL”.

### **2.3.2. What the Australia-based research tells us about novice principalship leadership development**

Anderson, Davids, Douglas, Llyod, Niven and Theile (2010) note that Australia’ differs from other developed countries because there is both centralisation, with greater emphasis on national standards, curriculum and assessment and decentralisation, with greater emphasis on the accountability responsibilities resting on the novice principals. Hence, by relating recent writings from the NCSL in the United Kingdom (2006) to the Australian research on novice principals “deeper reflections on emergent leadership are fostered” (Cranston, 2008, p.8). Caldwell and Harris (2008) add that this locates Australian novice principal development to the broader contexts of leaders. Clarke (2008, p.138) notes that “a particular linkage between leadership and school effectiveness that has been stressed in the Australian context is the relation between the quality of emergent leadership and competencies that are aspirational in guiding and encouraging further growth. It is in this regard that Caldwell and Spinks (2008) suggest four domains or capitals that can be adopted to catalyse capacity building in newly promoted principals. The four domains are the intellectual, social, spiritual and the financial domains. Each domain or capital is briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

Dimmock and Walker (2005,p.4) argue that “given the multi-ethnic nature of schools around the world, novice principals nowadays shoulder the responsibility for shaping their schools in ways that value and integrate heterogeneity into successful learning communities for all”. Induction play a key function in contextualising preparatory activities for novice principals. Davies (2005, p. 9) states that “leadership cannot be separated from the context within which it is exerted. It is contingent on the setting, the nature of the school, the goals being pursued, the individuals

involved, resources and timeframes”. NCSL (2007c) writings echo this statement by stating that “it is virtually meaningless to talk about induction without reference to the school context”.

Leithwood, *et.al.* (2006b) foregrounds that novice principals need to be aware of their own values, beliefs and principles as well as those of their schools systems and community. This reflects the NCSL writings that emergent leadership is highly interpersonal, purposefully value-driven through social activities. In the Australian context, induction activities are referred to as the intellectual and social domains. The strength of formal and informal partnerships and networks involving the school and all individuals agencies that have the potential to support and be supported by the novice principals falls within this domain. These activities are premised on pre-service capacity building innovations inducting accreditation programmes.

Spiritual capital refers to the strength of moral purpose and the degree of coherence among values, beliefs and attitudes about life and learning shared by members of the schools and its community. Research by Branson (2005) suggests that comprehensive and holistic leadership practices incorporate nurturing authentic emergent leadership is key for the spiritual capital. This kind of leadership is of “principled task and social expertise” (Lord & Hall, 2005, p.592). This reflects clarity about values, beliefs and attitudes prevalent in the school community. Leadership activities for novice principals need include the ethics and values for their holistic development to be successful. Coaching, mentoring and networking dominate this capital.

The last capital, the financial domain refers to the finances available for the novice principals to disperse appropriately within the school. This brings in the relational activity or a distributed activity according to the NCSL into the Australian emergent leadership development. Novice principals require capacity building programmes that promote effective communication to maximise the leadership capabilities in their schools to be successful in this domain or capital. Mentoring is essential in equipping the novice principal with the necessary tools to deal with the challenges of this domain.

### 2.3.3. Emergent leadership development in the USA

Friedman (2009) recognises the societal transformation as the source of a new life dimension that increases the complexity confronting novice principals in the USA nowadays. This warrants for a new understanding of socialising new principals into enacting their duties in a climate where “knowledge’s flexible, fluid, ever-expanding and ever-shifting resource”(Hargreaves, 2003,p.16). Accountability and public scrutiny has dramatically increased the analyses of beginning principals’ entrepreneurial skills in instructional processes, students outcomes and in connections with the community. Lindle (2004) advocates that these complexities have resulted in a variety of leadership dysfunctional features including a culture of dependency, divisiveness among staff, loss of integrity, an end to ingenuity and emotional strain. Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa and Creighton (2005), in responding to these challenges confronting novice principals, suggests four conceptual elements of socialising them into their mandated roles and responsibilities.

Anticipatory socialisation is embedded into the accumulated leadership and management experiences and expertise prior to being the newly promoted principals (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). At this stage the new principals’ role conception is informed by experiences as a teacher and observing leadership practices enacted by peers. Cultural modes (ceremonies, rites, myths and school site culture) are recognized as more important than overt induction activities as key socialising agents in anticipatory socialisation. This is because they are more likely to bombard the novice principal with all the responsibilities expected from a veteran principal. *Professional socialisation* for aspiring principals entails developing context- specific knowledge, skills and dispositions (Levine, 2005). The web of networkings, teamwork and collaborative practices feature prominently in professional socialisation. Internship, based on coursework offered at tertiary level is an integral component of this developmental stage. Socialising agencies of professional socialisation are mainly coaching (by a tutor) and networking with relevant social partners. *Organisational socialisation* is typically grounded on learning ‘how things are done here’ (Matthew & Crow, 2003). The lack of mediated entry creates burnout, stress and ineffective performance if novice principal are not mentored at this stage. They develop quick fixes and unreflective practices, responses which are counterproductive to effective leadership. A

distributive approach to leadership, mentoring and networking facilitates a smooth transition through this stage of socialisation.

*Personal socialisation* encourages the novice principal to mobilise, foster and promotes positives changes by employing internalised personal strengths and assets (Crow,2006). The principals enacts the role of being the ‘producer and designer’ of change practices in their schools through personal socialisation. Emotional intelligence development and translating theoretical experience into practicable expertise are facilitative factors of personal socialisation. Reflectively there is correspondence between the four conceptual socialization stages (USA) and NCSL developmental initiatives for novice principals. Seemingly, the Australian model is influenced by the NCSL programme but lacks clarity in terms of the sequential flow between the various phases of development.

## **2.4 Novice principals in Africa: A synoptic view on preparation, induction and practice**

Bush and Oduro (2006, p.360) foreground that:

Novice principals in developing African countries face challenges that differ drastically from those faced by their counterparts in developed countries such as the USA, UK and Australia. Despite the importance of principalship, the means by which beginning principals in developing countries are trained, inducted and in-serviced are ill-suited to the development of effective and efficient school leadership.

Oplatka (2004, p.428) provides a definition of developing countries as “countries that were ruled by Europeans for long time. Their economy is more agriculture-based and they are usually characterised by high mortality rates, high birth rates, high level of poverty and large gaps between rich and poor”. Therefore Africa is unique in that almost every country can be categorised as ‘developing’.

Challenges facing novice principals include those generated by the demographic contexts. Inkoom (2005) writes that in Ghana gender role stereotype traditions are rife where preference of educating a male supercedes that of female children. As a result, female dropout rates are

particularly high in Ghana. The economies of developing countries are also particularly fragile and exposed to global economic changes. In many African countries child labour is often seen as a necessary evil for the survival of poor families (Agezo & Christian, 2002). The resource context paints a bleak picture of the human and material resource available in these countries. Fabummi and Adewale (2002, p.47) report that “most secondary schools lack the basic educational resources that can make instruction effective and productive. Adequately furnished classrooms are often not available in schools resulting in congested overcrowded classrooms”. The majority of schools in rural areas in Africa do not have electricity and are manned by unqualified and under qualified teachers.

Hammond (2004) provides stark examples of the horrific impact of war and violence that plague African countries’ the education systems. These problems sometimes result in school closure. AlertNet (2005) remarks on the health context which is perpetuated by the absolute poverty in which millions of African people live. There is also the threat of drought in these countries, leading to malnutrition (Nilsson, 2003). Oduro (2003, p.203) points out that in developing countries education is influenced by a “cultural orientation towards the exercise of authority and power, the value of old age and language”. The values and beliefs of traditional cultures co-exists with the undesirable corruption and nepotism and cultural politics in schools. These, in a nutshell, are challenges confronting emergent leadership in Africa.

Bush and Jackson (2002, p.408) observe that” preparation in many African is not a requirement for appointment as novice principal and there is still an (often unwritten) assumption that good teachers can become effective leaders without specific preparation. Oplatka (2004, p.434) declares that in Nigeria and Botswana teaching experience may not be necessary. “Many novice principals have never been in a classroom since political connections may be the dominant factor in their appointments”. In Kenya, Herriot, Crossley, Juma, Waude, Mwiroti and Kamau (2002, p.510) state that “ many novice principals have been identified as leaders in schools on the basis of dubious qualifications often of a personal nature rather than relevant experience and proven skills in the field of management”. It is, thus, evident that preparation for novice school principals is inadequate throughout Africa.

This is in spite of what Bush (2008, p.420) refers to as the emergent consensus on the content on emergent leadership development initiatives in developed countries:

The content of educational leadership initiatives has considerable similarities in different countries, leading to a hypothesis that there is an international curriculum for leadership preparation. Most courses on leadership, including vision, mission and distributive leadership, give prominence to issues of leading and managing, incorporating the main tasks of human resources development, finance, curriculum and external relations management.

There is only limited literature on the induction of novice principals in Africa. Bush and Oduro (2006, p.366) state that “too often and without consideration, novice principals in developing countries, like Kenya, are tossed into the job without pre-service training, without guarantee of in- service training and without support from their employers.” Thus, van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007, p.37) foreground that “novice principals practices rely on their common sense, acquired expertise as teachers and character. Therefore, wide- ranging changes in the education systems have rendered many practicing novice principals ineffective because of the absence of capacitation prior to and after their entry into principalship”. Only in Seychelles is quality provision availed to novice principals. Such are the differences between African novice principals and their counterparts in developed countries (Bush, 2008).

## **2.5 Landscape of novice leadership in South African schools: Mapping the changes**

Mathibe (2007, p.523) writes that South African novice principals “are not appropriately skilled and prepared for school management and leadership. Hence, effective preparation could facilitate helping aspirant principals to cope with the entry demands to principalship”. Vander Westhuizen, Mosoge and Van Vuuren (2004, p.717) point out that “the design and content of preparation initiatives should be geared towards developing required skills and knowledge to enable novice principals to transfer those skills and knowledge to their school context”. Previous development practices focused on the collection of qualifications and certification (the what of leadership) with little attention being paid to the actual ability to the transfer and application of learnt knowledge (the how of leadership). The DoE (2005, p.3) conceptualised and developed a



programme “to provide structured learning opportunities that promote quality education in South African schools through the development of novice leaders to apply critical understanding, values, knowledge and skills to school leadership and management in line with the vision of democratic education transformation”. The leadership developmental initiative introduced by the DoE, in consultation with higher education institutions, is the Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership (ACE:SL). Although not solely designed for novice principals, it is regarded as “a critical contribution to building a new pool of capable education leaders for our South African schools” (Pandor, 2007, p.17).

The ACE:SL programme, though not as advanced in terms of implementation, is the South African equivalent of the UK NCSL and the related initiatives in Australia and USA. Some of the learning conditions foregrounded by Gray and Bishop (2009) have been considered in the formulation of the programme. Contextualised role embedded learning, coupled with on the job application of knowledge and practices, is prioritised. This enhances focused learning experiences for novice principals as they learn to solve a range of school problems. Problems or challenges facilitate exposing new principals to new experiences and the development of new capacities. The process is undergirded by support, feedback and assessment through mentoring and coaching. In this regard, developmental mentoring, emphasising mentor-mentee mutuality and mentee self-direction is adopted (McGuire, 2011b). This is in contrast to sponsorship mentoring which emphasizes the mentor as senior to the mentee and performing an advocacy role (Clutterbuck, 2008). Coaching is the vehicle through which novice principals are motivated to learn, grow and change through interactive consultations with tutors. Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2011) foreground that mentoring and coaching facilitate higher career satisfaction and expedite career progress. Although this initiative is still in its infancy, the three key drivers of leadership development, identified by Gray and Bishop (2009), viz. assessment, challenge and support are incorporated in this accreditation project.

However, the ACE:SL is not strong on distributive leadership as a transformative tool. Heystek (2007) views it as an attempt by the government to extend its control over the preparation of novice principals through a tightly structured initiative with a specific format and outcomes, i.e a

political strategy than a 'leadership learning exercise'. Networking is also limited to those who are registered in the programme as it is a structured formal initiative.

## **2.6. The Theoretical frameworks**

Most of the current education systems are grounded on democratic principles. Democracy, in education, embodies interactive, collaborative, collective and integrated practices designed to transform schools into laboratories of democracy (Bush, 2008). School leadership requires re-alignment with the dictates of the democratic school reforms. This implies that the understanding of leadership demands changing from a focus exclusively on one person who alone turns schools around to an organizational quality distributed among numerous individuals (Mulford & Silins, 2003). In this conception, novice principals become responsible for not only sharing leadership and delegating authority but also increasing leadership capacity in their schools. Since in democracy, "the exercise of human agency is about intentional action, exercising choice, making a difference and monitoring effects", novice principals now have to be more outward looking than they used to be (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007, p.6). Influenced by these variables the distributed leadership theory seems the 'best fit' theoretical framework to adopt for this research project. The theory is coupled with the asset-based approach. Both are about empowering the school human resource to generate workable agendas in dealing with change forces and other additional demands that magnify the unique complexity and uncertainty confronting schools in the current democratic dispensation. Both favour "leadership determined by purpose rather than rank" (Jackson & Temperley, 2007, p.60).

Harris (2010, p.55) writes that "the most important thing going forward is to break the boundaries between people so we can operate as a single intelligence". This is important in fostering the new image of self managing or autonomous democratic schools. Autonomous schools dictate that leadership be a dynamic organisational entity (Spillane, 2006). Hence, leadership does not have to be, nor should be, the function of someone specifically designated as holding a formal office (Obolensky, 2008). Senge, Scharmer, Jawonski and Flowers (2005) add that leadership has shifted from hierarchial (with leaders at the top) to more distributed or shared forms to cultivate the capacity of those in service to what is seeking to emerge, in this instance democratic self managing schools. Establishing such schools entails introducing "new ways of working and distributed authority" (Collarbone, 2005, p.827). The theory allows for spreading

organisational influence and decision making that is governed by interactions among school structures rather than individual directions. The School Governing Body (SGB), School Management Team (SMT) and the learners Representative Council (LRC), the school's prominent structures, are favourably capacitated through the application of the distributive nature of the adopted theory.

Educational leadership is an exercise in developing practice and comprises a linkage of theory or knowledge with provision (practice) producing what is essentially an applied or pragmatic or learned knowledge (Ribbins, 2008). 'Learning to lead' and 'leadership in education which enable learning' form a particular inclusive distributed leadership in this context (Frost, 2008). Novice principals, through inclusive distributed leadership can learn from others, learn from their mandated tasks and learn with others. This provides a fertile ground to cultivate learning communities and manage diversity in a learning community as learning occurs at all the levels of the school. By implication, distributed leadership catalyses a more rapid response to change (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006), ensure a better collective development of stakeholders (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Thomas, Wallance, Greenwood & Hawkey, 2006) and contributes to improved learner outcomes (Roberts & Pruitt, 2003). The prime function of this inclusive distributed leadership is to facilitate learning opportunities for all the members at the school so that they can develop into productive leaders. A greater role in producing innovations that lead to progressive change ensues among all school stakeholders. In turn, the overload complexity and frustrations from leadership and management duties for novice principals is reduced within such learning communities. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) write that this theory, in this context, is a platform for deliberate capacity building within the school and produces sustainable shared leadership as everyone is engaged in the learning processes. Lima (2007) augments the latter statements by pointing out that the administrative and instructional levels work collaboratively in learning for school change thereby eliminating the isolation of being at the apex for the novice principal.

The distributed leadership theory does not imply that the formal leadership structures within the school are removed or redundant instead it is assumed that there is powerful relationship between vertical and lateral leadership processes (Caldwell, 2006). This is informed by the fact the focus is on leadership as production of knowledge, formally and informally, rather than as a role,

position or a set of competencies (Harris, 2007b). Since interactions, rather than actions, in the leadership roles is fostered, representational power of all stakeholders is enhanced. This is central to the school reconfiguration and organisational redesign as it promotes relational leadership which is attuned and in touch with the intricate web of inter- and intra – relationships, that influences the school (Spillane, Camburn & Pareja, 2007). A culture of distributive leadership, through these relationships and representations, also establishes and grooms new leaders for succession purposes (Fullan, 2003).

Viewed from the operational perspective, the theory offers diverse pragmatic applications (Harris, 2007b). Certain functional school policies involve reciprocal interdependency, where the leadership practices of different leaders require pooled inputs from one another to produce a particular leadership function. Formulating the school Discipline, Safety and Security Plans requires contributions from the leaders of the SMT, SGB, LRC, South African Police Service (SAPS) and Community Policing Forums (CPF). They interact together collaboratively and simultaneously to ensure that the protective welfare of the school is maintained.

Another alternative operational attribute of the theory involves leaders working separately but interdependently in pursuit of a common goal that will be collectively achieved. The overall quality of academic performance of learners is rooted in this operational attribute. The novice principal with the SGB work separately but interdependently with educators by providing the appropriate resources and infrastructure conducive to qualitatively improving the academic outcomes of the school.

A third operational feature of the theory focuses on the sequential enactment of leadership practices to produce the desired leadership function. There is a sequential but a shared flow of distributed practices in planning, monitoring, evaluating and establishing remedial activities in curricular programmes. The sequential co-ordination of these practices is the domain of the novice principal but the his/her knowledge and expertise is best explored at group or team level, beyond the analyses of personal flaws. Wageman, Nunes, Burrus and Hackman (2008) advocate that novice principals develop the ability to create and manage effective teams, stimulate an environment in which sharing innovations and knowledge flourishes. The operational aspects of the theory are fundamental to communicating complex concepts of strategy comprehensibly to wider stakeholder teams. Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2007) point out that

distributive leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exists in the member of organisation. This bedrock belief of this is that people in an organisation contribute to the goals and vision by participating inventively in practices that can never be fully captured by other institutionalised practices. Maximising the inherent potential of organisational members counteracts the predominantly deficiency based approach to development. In the deficiency-based approach, “well intentioned developmental efforts generates needs surveys, analysed problems and identified solutions to meet those needs” (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p.476). This reinforces the notion that only outside experts can provide real help and creates leadership that denigrates the school members’ assets. The dependence on what their leadership say leads to conceptualising themselves as deficient and incapable of taking charge of their lives and of their situations. Members of such an organisation exhibit symptoms of the breakdown in solving capacities of their own problems. Development is compromised and fragmentation in solution provision ensues. The distributed leadership theory provides an opportunity for an alternative approach to organisational development, namely, the asset-based approach.

Leadership and management duties, as earlier disclosed, may be viewed as a professional challenge for novice principals if internal capacity building interventions are not readily accessible. However, Kretzmann and Mc Knight (1996) argue that this view entails focusing on needs, deficiencies and problems that can only be addressed through deficiency – oriented external initiatives and innovations. Novice principals, viewed through this deficiency model are seen, and see themselves as being with special needs that can only be met by outsiders i.e. the incentive to see themselves as potential and capable problem solvers is destroyed. Their innate capacities, aptitudes and strengths for leadership is underestimated rendering them as incapable of taking charge and positively pioneering development in their schools. Links of mutual support and problem solving within the schools community is definitely eroded by perpetuating the perception that only outside experts can provide real help. Reformative development and any serious progressive change is curtailed if the school is shrouded in a culture of pervasive dependency and a sense of helplessness. Consequently, they suggest the promotion of a capacity-focused development strategy for novice principals and their respective schools, namely, the asset-based theory or approach.

The asset-based approach is a set of methods for organisational mobilization, a strategy for organisation- based strengthening bedrocked on a process of internal capacity maximisation (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006). This approach motivates for the formulation of policies and activities informed by the capacities, skills and internal asset of the school community by the novice principals. Each member of the school thus represents a resource upon which to reform and regenerate each institution according to the abilities, gifts, aptitudes and talents discovered and understood by the novice principals development starts from within thus promotes integral development through assembling strengths into new combinations, new structures, new opportunities and new possibilities for improved quality production.

Locating available assets and connecting them with one another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness facilitates commitment from stakeholders to invest themselves and their resources on the overall enacted effort. Mapping out the skills and capacities enhances the development of teams or associations tend to be an indispensable tool for efficient and effective school functionality. Should novice principals introduce and establish these associations so that they are cohered and driven by the school vision and mission, they can be stretched beyond their original purposes and intentions to become full contributors to the whole school developmental process. Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2012) view these associations as engines of action and sources of power as they foster the conviction that every person or group has capacities, abilities and skills that can be tapped into as the starting point towards achieving the intended goals of the school.

Furthermore, Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) advocate that external interventions will be much effectively used if the school is itself fully mobilized and fully conversant with its own agendas. Since, the asset-based approach is internally focused and relationship-driven, it resonates favourably with the lifelong learning feature of the current democratic education system. In addition, the entrepreneurial character of this system is enhanced through the asset-based approach, Mathie and Cunningham (2003, p.481) note that this theory may be employed as a “vehicle through which the institution base identifies problems and develops conditions that create innovation and entrepreneurship for increased wealth and incomes and increased opportunities for potential fulfillment”.

It is the aforementioned prominent features of the distributed leadership theory and the asset-based approach which mitigated for their adoption to underpin this research study.

## **2.7. Chapter summary**

The reviewed literature indicates that there is a relationship between the quality of leadership and school improvement. This leads to a consideration of how well should leaders be developed for this task. The journey from novices to experienced leadership is seen to involve the development of appropriate skills, knowledge and wisdom over time, incidentally or orchestrated, especially in the formative years of the principals his career. This serves to address the complexity and diversity of contexts where the practices are performed by the novice principals. National programmes involving induction, mentoring and coaching initiatives, have been adopted by most developed countries. Accreditation programmes have been formulated and they also incorporated the aforementioned initiatives. The focus is on more personalized support which is essential to fostering successful transition to leadership. Work based learning, as informal networking, is identified as enhancing leadership development. However, appropriate linkage between work-based elements and taught course elements need much further consideration through research works.

Successful leadership is perceived by many as a form of leadership that engages all the stakeholders in the learning activities. Distributed leadership working in tandem with the asset-based approach, presents a strong case for adoption to facilitate this type of leadership. Since the era belongs to the democratic dispensation of education, reforms designed for transforming the schools into self-managing schools, distributed leadership channeled through determining the strengths of the available human resource or at the school site, tends to generate a learning community at the school. Collaborative problem solving is enhanced and developmental growth catalyzed. The challenge is whether practice equates to theory learnt and this is what this research project seeks to explore that challenge.

The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology in this study. The research design, methodology and the paradigm in which the research study is located are also discussed

in details. Instruments and associated practices, ethical considerations and limitations to the study compliment the aforestated philosophical dimensions of the research project.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1.Introduction**

The preceding chapter dealt with the local and international literature review. This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology. Instruments employed to generate data and related subjects like sampling and pilot the research are also incorporated in this chapter. Ethical consideration observed during the research process and limiting factors to the study conclude the chapter.

Many scholars question whether training newly promoted principals using current traditional approaches is adequate given that effective school leadership is so rare (Schmoker, 2005). Novice principals, to a remarkable degree, are not fully prepared for the challenges thrown their way as attested to by Hess and Kelly (2005). They advocate that the shaping of these principals must begin before formal assumption given the obligations and high expectations to create good schools. Empowerment should continue beyond formal assumption in this era of accountability. Consequently, scholars regard the world of newly promoted principals as an incentive for further research.

Leadership skills and professional practices are necessary to foster sound relationship inter- and intra- school and district (Levine, 2005). These are required to transform human energy into desired academic, professional and social growth in schools. Levine (2005) lambasts poorly conceived plans, designed to capacitate novice principals, as being overloaded and complicated, thus, a distraction to continuous school leadership development. One avenue of exploring the views of novice principals on this discourse is working and observing them in an interactive research process. The research process, in this chapter, epitomises the research design and the methodology adopted to engage novice principals in this research study. Data generating or producing methods, to elicit the desired data from the participant principals, from their lived experiences and perspectives, compliments the design and methodology. Further elucidation on the aforementioned phenomenon is provided by how the sample was constituted and piloting relevant research instruments. The penultimate component preceding the chapter summary,

comprises the ethical considerations and limitations to the study during the actual practical research process.

### **3.2. The Research design**

Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2005, p.15) defines the research design as “the practices of coming to know and way we study these practices”. In other words, the research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical research assumptions (ontology and epistemology) to specifying the selection of participants, data gathering and data analysis techniques employed in the research process.

This research is premised on a qualitative research approach. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2006, p.264) foreground that this design is the basis of a research process which “is an attempt to understand participants perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation, concept or phenomenon”. Hence, the approach is selected because it allows for contextualised, exploratory and personal researching of participants. It is exactly this freedom and natural development of presentation and action, grounded on leadership and management challenges facing novice principals, that this research project seeks to capture. The variables are not controlled or contrived in qualitative research designs. Consequently, people or systems are studied by interacting and observing the participants in their natural environment where the focus is on meaning and interpretation. Therefore, the emphasis is on the quality and depth of the unique subjective information provided by each participant through the adoption of the qualitative research approach.

The adoption of the qualitative research approach is also fostered by ontological assumptions underlying this research project. In this study it is assumed that the nature and forms of reality (that which is or can be known) consists of human – constructed mental entities (Maree, 2007). These entities describe, give meaning and make sense of the perceived reality. The entities evolve through a process of knowledge acquisition which leads to conceptual understanding. This process embodies the sum total of all interactions and involvements (human personalised experiences) with the external world and how these are interpreted. Maree (2007, p.55) refers to research based on these mental entities and associated interpretations as “an attempt to see how others have constructed their reality by asking them about it”. These personal experiences,

beliefs and value- laden accounts or perceptions are biased and subjective but pertaining to this nature of qualitative research, they are accepted as true for those who have lived through them. This ontological assumption acknowledges an interactive relationship between the participants and their own experiences and how they have constructed reality based on those experiences. This study seeks to explore novice principals' accounts of the reality they have constructed through their lived experiences in learning to carry out their mandated duties.

Epistemologically, the qualitative research approach, resonates favourably with how knowledge of reality and the method of knowing the nature of reality is generated. (Maree, 2007). The focus in epistemology is on the relationship between the knower (the novice principals) and the known (dealing with mandated duties). In other words, how do the participants generate the 'know-how' and how they translate that knowledge into practices that develop and improve their schools as they execute their duties. What counts as knowledge or what participant view as knowledge should emerge from interactions between the participants and the researcher. Patterns, trends and themes emerging during the research process should be understood as real life situations, embedded in that uniquely defined context. Through this epistemological assumption, subjective knowledge is produced between subjective elements of the social enquiry. Therefore, even if the findings cannot be generalised, greater on clarity understanding of the human condition is enhanced. This corresponds with the nature of this research project which is explorative rather than conclusive and seeks to locate the research process in its cultural and historical context.

### **3.3. The research paradigm and methodology**

This qualitative research project is located within the interpretive paradigm. The paradigm, in its broadest senses, refers to research that elicits participants personal accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions of reality (de Vos, *et.al*, 2006). Therefore, the centrality of adopting the paradigm in this research is an endeavour to understand the subjective world of human experience (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). Interpretive efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within thus retaining the integrity of the phenomena being explored. The paradigm focuses on action and choosing it is augmented by its epistemological roots in phenomenology. Phenomenological research focuses on direct experiences, taken at face value and one that sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by

external objective and physically described reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). This reflects the nature of the research project located in the interpretive paradigm.

Research design “is the rationale for the way the research process proceeds. It gives reasons for selecting or using instruments or techniques in relation to the kind of knowledge or understanding the researcher is seeking” (Mpungose, 2007, p.75). Since this research explores how novice principals learn to deal with leadership and management challenges, the Case Study has been viewed as the ‘best fit’ design on which to premise the study. The case study is “an empirical enquiry that investigate a temporary phenomenon, within its real life context, when boundaries between context and the phenomenon are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 2004, p.23). This is line with multiple data collection instruments earmarked for involving participants in the study. Moreover, as the sample is constituted of four principals, the multiple case study approach as suggested by Robson (2002) is preferred. Above all, the case study allows for the unique example of real people, in real life situations, enabling the dynamic unfolding interactions of human relationships and other factors in that unique instance (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). These reasons mitigated for choosing the case study design for this research.

### **3.4. Sampling**

Sampling refers to the process used to select the participants from the entire population of novice principals in the Pinetown District. This project being qualitative in character, the non probability purposive sampling has been utilized to select the members of the sample of novice principals. Purposive sampling means that participants have been selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study (Maree, 2007). Hence, the novice principals included in the sample have been handpicked on the basis of a typical feature or particular characteristic being sought. The members of the sample has been drawn from urban and rural, primary and high schools to represent a diversity of contextual variables. Purposive sampling is also used in order to access those who have in depth knowledge about particular issues by virtue of their professional experience (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). Four novice principals, with less than two years’ experience in their new positions, constitute the sample. They may or may not have been formally capacitated to be included in this

research. Gender orientation will be determined by the availability of members who satisfy purposive sampling criteria.

### **3.5. Methods or instruments chosen for data production or generation**

Documents review, observations and semi-structured interviews were selected for data production and collection in this project. The multiple method of data generation, referred to as triangulation, seemed the best technique to be adopted because it “is the best way to elicit the various and divergent constructions of reality that exists within the context of the research study and increases more chances to collect information about different aspects and relationship, from different points of view” (Babbie & Mouton, 2004, p.23). Moreover, multiple methods of data generation and collection enhance the trustworthiness of the data through verification and comparing the data collected through other instruments.

#### **3.5.1. Documents review**

Documents reviewed focused on all written communication that may shed light on the phenomena that were being explored or investigated (Henning, *et.al.*,2007). The technique is very useful in evaluating the authenticity and accuracy of data collected using the other instruments. In this research project I reviewed the following documents: non-personal secondary documents, e.g. minutes of meetings, vision, mission statement, communication book, strategic plans, were targeted for review. These documents, viewed as secondary documents, reflected on how the novice principal has interpreted, contextualised and practiced primary documents to effectively run the school. Primary documents include all DoE legislative and policy documents. The documents for reviewed provided a record of continuous non-verbal communication which is formal and structured involving various structures of the school, unlike personal diaries

#### **.3.5.2. Observations**

Observations were included as an instrument to enable the researcher to look afresh at everyday behaviour that otherwise might be taken for granted, expected or go unnoticed. Robson (2002, p.310) declare that “what people do may differ from what they say they do and observation provides a reality check”. The observations were sessions of shadowing the novice principals to

determine the degree of congruency between the verbal responses to the interview schedule the written information from the documents reviewed and the enacted leadership and management activities during a normal school. What was observed from the each individual novice principal varied according to what was disclose during the interview and the data from the documents reviewed.

### **3.5.3. Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were selected as one of the methods of data generation to capture the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and to emphasise the social situatedness of the collected data. Maree (2007, p.87) foregrounds that they “serve to obtain-rich descriptive data that helps the researcher to understand the participants’ construction of knowledge and social reality”. Semi-structured interviews “help in unfolding the meaning of people’s experiences and to uncover their world prior to scientific explanations” (de Vos, *et al.*, 2006, p.287).

Each participant was expected to answer a set of similar open-ended question as pre-determined on the interview schedules. This was meant to allow room for flexibility in scope and depth of the responses from the participants. Face to face interaction with the participants, where the open-ended questions were asked, was employed. This will enhanced the generation of further subsequent clarity seeking questions or for probing deeper whenever necessary. Maree (2007) refers to this phenomenon as a two persons conversation, initiated by the researcher, for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information.

### **3.5.4. The pilot study**

All aspects, planned for use in the main research process, were piloted through a tentative action plan involving two novice principals. Mpungose (2007, p.77) views the pilot study as “a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analyses are adequate and appropriate”. The purpose for this test-run in this project was to fine-tune the research instruments thus limiting the degree of biasness, subjectivity and ambiguity. The clarity of the language of communication and order of scheduled questions were screened through the pilot study.

### **3.5.5. Data analysis**

Data generated and collected through the chosen instruments was then analysed through content analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). Content analysis was based on constant comparison of the newly acquired data with the information accumulated through literature review and theoretical frameworks against the background of key research questions. Analysis, as a sequence, provides means of establishing correspondence or refuting previous arguments on the strength of the evidence of the emergent data. If the latter proves to be the case, a new body of knowledge on that particular issue may be created. The collected data was transcribed, examined and scanned through inductive analysis to generate categories of phenomena, to seek relationships between categories, to classify according to concepts and theories and summarise according to findings prior to making conclusions recommendations. Data analysis techniques are discussed fully in the succeeding chapter.

### **3.5.6. Ethical considerations**

I applied for an ethical clearance certificate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) issued an ethical clearance certificate to acknowledge and approve the research project. Letters to the Head of UKZN DoE, Dr. Sishi and the DoE research office, to present the research proposal and seek permission to conduct the study in schools within their jurisdiction, has been forwarded. The response stating terms and conditions i.e. parameters, was positive. Each participant principal was then contacted physically and through written letters. The purpose was to introduce myself as the researcher, give them a detailed explanation of the nature of the research project and solicit their voluntary and willing participation in the research process. Anonymity of their schools and their surnames was addressed through the use of pseudonyms. Confidentiality of generated and collected data was guaranteed verbally as well as through the invitational letters. Mutual consent was sought prior to recording the proceedings of the research. Participants will be informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at their own discretion at any given time. They were also guaranteed free access to the research data to ensure correspondence between collected and elicited data.

### **3.6. Limitations to the study**

Flaws that may be inherent in the application of the selected research instrument were limited through employing the pilot study. The understanding of the language of communication in terms of simplicity and reliability and the sequential flow of questions, usually limiting factors to research, were attended to in the pilot phase of the study. Ambiguity, subjectivity and biasness, from the side of the researcher and when eliciting data from participants was also limited through piloting. Personal accounts during interviews tend to be subjective (Maree, 2007). This affects the degree of trustworthiness of the collected data. Subjectivity was reduced by assuring the participants that their performance was not being appraised. Rather, the explorative study seeks to determine how can the challenges they encounter in the execution of their duties be addressed. Participants were also be given the freedom to choose the space conducive to the interview process at a time convenient to them to eliminate unnecessary distractions and interruptive noise. Limitations to the trustworthiness of the research data collected was minimised through the triangulation of the instruments. The findings of this through interpretive techniques, may not be generalisable nor repeated accurately, repeatable as human development is progressive.

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

The research design and methodology, including the paradigm in which the study is located, provide the philosophical premise on which the project is grounded. The instruments, sampling, piloting, data analysis and ethical considerations focus mainly on the enactment of the research process and the associated research practices. Factors considered to have a potentially negative impact on the research process are reflected in the limitations to the study and also strategies designed to reduce, minimise or eliminate their potentially detrimental impact have been discussed.

Chapter four, the next chapter, will focus on presenting the data elicited and collected through the various instruments. Findings, derived from critiqueing that presented data through key research questions, literature reviewed and the adopted theoretical frameworks, will then be discussed. Content analysis has been adopted as a technique to screen and analyse the presented data.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The preceding chapter focused on the research approach and design which underpins this research study. This chapter presents the data generated from interviews, observations and documents reviews. A critique of the data is then facilitated through interrogating the key research questions, literature review and theoretical frameworks indicated in chapters one and two respectively. Pertinent findings derived from this critique are then discussed. These findings form the basis from which trends, patterns and themes emerge, prior to summarising this chapter.

Content analysis has been adopted as an analytic technique in the aforesaid process. Krippendorp (2004, p.18) defines content analysis as a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use”. He then, explains that texts are “any written communication materials which are intended to be read, interpreted and understood by people other than the analyst” (Krippendorp, 2004, p.30). Interview transcripts and notes from the other research methods constitute the texts in this study. It is from these texts or communicative documents that inferences, leading to derivative findings, are drawn. The critique of these, as an analytic process, is intended to be read, interpreted and understood by all concerned parties besides me, the analyst. These features motivated for selecting the content analysis as the research technique for data analysis in this chapter.

#### **4.2. The biographical data of the participants:**

Each participant is assigned a pseudonym to preserve his or her anonymity for ethical reasons. The biographical data on table 1 reflects that, by virtue of being in the School Management Team (SMT), Mr. Fire (17 years), Mrs. McLite (11 years) and Mr. Tiger (10 years) were exposed to management and leadership duties for the entire duration in brackets. During this period, their job descriptions and delegated roles and responsibilities provided them with hands-on-experiences and learning opportunities under the professional tutelage of their former principals.

The leadership and management roles of principals and deputy principals frequently overlap to such an extent that the latter runs the school if the former is otherwise engaged. Therefore, by observing, participative involvement or delegation, they were familiarised with the duties mandated to principals. It is an interpretive assumption that during their tenure as SMT members, prior to being principals, they had acquired or evolved noteworthy leadership and management expertise and acumen.

**Table 1 THE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PARTICIPANTS**

	Mr Lexus	MrsMcLite	Mr Tiger	Mr Fire
<b>GENDER</b>	Male	Female	Male	Male
<b>TYPE OF SCHOOL</b>	Primary School in rural	High School in rural area	Primary School in urban area	High School in urban area
<b>AGE GROUP</b>	25-45 yrs	46-65 yrs	25-45yrs	46-65 yrs
<b>QUALIFICATION</b>	B.SC., PGCE	B. Ed	B.A.(Project Mngt), SPTD	B.A.,B.A. (hons) JSTC,B.Ed (hons)
<b>WORK EXPERIENCE AT VARIOUS LEVELS</b>				
<b>POST LEVEL ONE</b>	7yrs	17yrs	6yrs	15yrs
<b>HEAD OF DEPARTMENT</b>	---	---	5months	2yrs
<b>DATE PROMOTED AS PRINCIPALS</b>	1yr 3mths 18-07-2011	1yr 7mths 15-03-2011	1yr 3 mths 18-07-2011	1yr 6mths 12-05-2011

In addition, the biographical data also indicates that all the participants' had a fundamental theoretical knowledge on management and leadership as an integral component of their professional qualifications. Given that even Mr. Tiger, with a project management B.A degree that had leadership as a component, it may be argued that all were conversant with leadership and management theories. Hence, conceptually they were, to a certain extent, capacitated.

However, the biographical data, being statistical to a certain degree, is largely suggestive than conclusive. By virtue of being newly promoted principals, all the participants were catapulted into being key agents of educational changes in their respective contexts. This automatically entrusted them with the task of ensuring that the transformative legislated vision and direction of the current democratic education is realised in their schools. The combination of their cumulative experiences, prior knowledge and appropriate professional qualification suggest that, theoretically and experientially they were fundamentally acquainted with the phenomena of school leadership and management. What cannot be gauged from the biographical data is the degree to which the conceptual knowledge was translated into transformative practices of leading and managing their schools.

Both Mrs. McLite and Mr. Fire's, as they completed the biographical data forms, indicated that they were promoted to principalship within the very schools in which they were currently playing their professional trade. Mr Fire's verbatim statement went as follows:

*I have the unusual distinction of having been a deputy in this school for the past 15 years...*

This creates a perception that they were conversant with the contextual variables prevailing in and beyond their schools. However, climbing the professional ladder within the same school, as a catalyst towards enhancing effective and efficient school functionality, cannot be backed up by employing the biographical data.

Mr. Lexus provides an alternative view to that of the majority hence a negative case. This is in terms of his cumulative experience as a member of the SMT and the limitedness of his prior knowledge in leadership contexts. Suffice to say his prior cumulative knowledge sets him apart from the rest.

The biographical data also indicate that the novice principals or participants were empowered by their former principals as required by the principles of the current democratic education system. Observing, participative involvement and delegated roles and responsibilities embody interactive, collaborative, collective and integrative features of democratic practices in schools. This demands changing from a focus exclusively on one person, the principal alone, turning the school around to leadership that is distributed among numerous individuals (Mulford & Silins,

2003). The prime function of this inclusive leadership is to facilitate learning opportunities to the participants to familiarise them with duties mandated to principals. Hence, by delegating principalship roles and responsibilities leadership shifts from being hierarchial to be more distributed or shared to cultivate the capacity of the participants. This suggests the distributed leadership theory in practice.

Delegation of principal duties to deputies is assumed to have been associated with identifying the individual strengths, abilities and skills of the participants by their former principals. Capacity maximization through empowering the participants was adopted as a powerful mechanism of increasing the human-resource assets of the school. This is a practical application of the asset-based approach since the above-stated is fostered by the conviction that the participants could enrich and enhance the quality of life within their respective schools.

#### **4.3. Discussion of findings**

Findings discussed below were deducted from data elicited from all participants responding to critical interview questions. Below they are presented according to the themes guarated following question by all the participants:

##### **4.3.1. Induction/orientation initiatives**

The majority view of the participants reflect that they were not formally oriented or inducted as newly promoted principals. Mr Fire's and Mr Tiger's verbatim expressions tend to suggested that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN-DoE) has no formal structure or framework for orienting or inducting newly promoted principals. Mr Fire declared that:

*...there is no programme that is directly prepared for principals who are entering the system...*

And Mr Tiger emphasised that: *... no orientation, there was nothing.*

However, Mr Lexus's statement alludes to the fact that it is the prerogative of the individual Ward Manager to facilitate the process of orientating new principals under his jurisdiction. The reason he foregrounded is the basis of this perception. He stated that:

*It happened that the Ward Manager got promoted... therefore, he was not available for orientating or inducting me and that is why I was not inducted or oriented.*

This may be interpreted as saying that not all Ward Managers comply with the KZN-DoE instructions to provide induction programmes for novice principals. As a result, some Ward Manager formulate and implement orientation exercises for new principals in their Wards, some do not. Probably because there is no formally structured monitoring to ensure that the induction initiatives have been availed to novice principals. Whatever the case maybe, this paints a very negative picture that the majority of the participants were not formally inducted or oriented into their new positions, given the critical importance of their mandate duties.

However, it is not clearly evident to what extent the absence of induction programmes impacted on how they run their schools. Findings derived from the documents reviews and observations reveal that they had taken the initiative to progressively modify the DoE legislated prescriptions to their individual schools needs. Given the commensurable increase in the nature of the scope and the scale of the mandated leadership and management duties in the democratic education era, it may be inferred that prevailing circumstances compelled them to seek alternative options of running functional schools. One such option is suggested by Leithwood (2005) that in the absence of induction, novice principals generate internal learning strategies that rapidly catalyse them as being resourceful, develops a mental ability for improvisations and become avid readers on educational trends to appropriately interpret where and how school energies should be deployed. Alternatively, they got to grips with their duties the hard way – “by learning from their mistakes” (Bright & Ware, 2003, p.13). The bottom line is that their school are functional as deduced from observations and documents reviews.

The majority view on the inavailability of induction initiatives concurs with the findings by Bush, *et al.* (2006) which reflects that most of the novice principals have never received adequate specialist preparation for their leadership and management roles. This majority view also substantiates what is foregrounded by Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2011) that the DoE’s legislated policies tend to underestimate the importance of preparing novice principals for their new roles and responsibilities. Hence, Bush and Oduro (2006) suggest that too often and without consideration novice principals are tossed into their jobs without pre-service training, a

guarantee of in-service training and without support from their employees. This is, however, at variance with the vision and the direction of the DoE's legislated policies, initiatives and innovations which state that the extent to which schools are able to make the necessary democratic changes will depend largely on the nature and quality of the internal management (Department of Education, 2006). Consequently, induction programmes should be the norm rather than a rare phenomenon given the key importance of reculturing schools to democratic practices in the current education system.

Furthermore, Mr. Fire raises two salient points in favour of the unquestionable necessity of orientation programmes for novice principals'. His pertinent comments are encapsulated in the following words:

*I would recommend that the DoE in some ways, they should organise something like that so that new principals will be in a position to deal with this kind of thing. I mean I am basing that on the experience I came across when I became a principal. There should be some kind of way that would, in anyway, put principals on par of the challenges, he might be expecting or encounter in the principalship position.*

The primary inference drawn from this recommendation is that induction must be mandatory for novice principals and the DoE must see to it that this is practiced. This implies that without effective preparation, Mr. Fire was floundering as he attempted to juggle the conflicting demands of his post as postulated by Sackney and Walker (2006). Mathibe's (2007) findings also lend support to the perception expressed by Mr. Fire. He declares that in South Africa, novice principals are not appropriately prepared and skilled for school management and leadership. Therefore, he advocates for effective induction that would help aspirant principals to cope with entry demands of principalship. Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren's (2007) findings, collaborating those of Mathibe, warns that failure to cope with the wide – ranging changes in the educational system has rendered many practising novice principals ineffective. Since the local initiation of change events, the steerage of the change process and sustaining the improvement (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007) is leadership-driven, the deductive assumption is that schools will be dysfunctional if newly promoted principals are not oriented or inducted.

The secondary inference drawn from Mr. Fire's words is that all induction initiatives should be contextualised. To support this he refers to his experiences on being promoted to his new position. Bush, *et.al.* (2006) warn that raw experience is not sufficient guide to equipping novice principals. Leadership, according to Davies (2005), cannot be separated from the context within pursued, the individuals involved, resources and timeframes. Therefore, as Mr. Fire's words suggest, it is virtually meaningless to talk about induction without reference to the school context.

The tremendous paradigm shift fostered by the current democratic reforms portray changes from bureaucratic education systems, with traditional views that focused on rules and procedures rather than collaboration, teamwork and shared decision making (Tekleselassie, 2002). This demands that, with or without induction, leadership, in the democratic system of education does not have to be nor should be, the function of someone specifically designated by holding a formal office (Obolensky, 2008). Novice principals, thus, are anticipated, through inclusive discribed leadership to learn from others, to learn from their mandated tasks and learn with others by utilising the asset- based approach. Though not clearly evident in the interview responses, the document reviews, observation and subsequent questions and responses suggest this was adopted by the novice principals in evolving strategies to promote their schools' functionality.

An emergent theme from these findings and discussions is that a preparatory induction is essential to all novice principals. In addition, induction plays a key function in contextualizing preparatory activities for novice principals. Therefore, the design and the content of the preparatory initiatives should be geared towards developing the required skills and knowledge to enable novice principals to transfer those skills and knowledge to their school contexts (Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge and Van Vuuren, 2004)

In contrast, Mrs McLite benefitted from a multiple of induction sessions. Her case is the minority view compared to what has been earlier discussed, thus academically referred to as the negative case. She uttered the following words as a testimony to being engaged in various induction programmes:

*I was inducted or oriented by the Ward Manager ... also by the District Support Team for Curriculum Management ...also in workshops arranged by them*

*District and Circuit Managers whereby all the SMT members were being oriented or inducted into their new posts.*

Her utterances indicate that induction innovations, by the various KZN-DoE structures, are the order of the day, in particular Districts. This generates a perception that, though not monitored, it is anticipated that, at least at District level, induction or orientation of novice principals should be mandatory. It so happens that Mr Lexus, who earlier alluded to this phenomenon and Mrs McLite serve under the same Ward Manager, though employed at different times. It can be inferred from this information that Mrs McLite, employed earlier, enjoyed all the benefits of, being oriented prior to the promotion of the same Ward Manager.

An additional thought rooted in Mrs McLite's utterances is that it was the newly promoted Ward Manager, mentioned by Mr Lexus, who inspired and fuelled the other related District structures to orient or workshop newly promoted principals and their SMT into their new positions. This assumption is premised on the fact that after his promotion, none of the structures mentioned by Mrs McLite inducted Mr Lexus. This suggests that he oriented or inducted new principals on his own initiative as the data does not indicate the existence of any KZN-DoE prescribed orientation innovation. It seems it was his own prerogative to facilitate the process of orienting new principals under his jurisdiction or Ward.

#### **4.3.2. The quality and relevance of orientation/ induction workshops**

Mr. Tiger, Mr. Lexus and Mr. Fire were not formally inducted, Mr. Fire improvised his self generated orientation by implementing the PMDP documents. Hence, they could not contribute to the evaluative assessment on the relevance and quality of the orientation activities.

Mrs. McLite found the material obtained from the induction relevant, satisfying but not fully comprehensible. Her voice is captured in these words:

*Some of the material ... was relevant ...I was satisfied even though further clarification were needed in my opinion.*



A transition involving the relinquishing the comforts and confidence of the well known HOD or Deputy leadership and management roles to experiencing the discomfort and uncertainty of the unfamiliar territory of being a novice principal (Ferrigno, 2003) is undergone by any newly-promoted principals. It is during this phase that novice principals struggle to understand how are they supposed to act, what are they supposed to know and what are they supposed to do (Morford, 2002), especially if not initiated. It is not far-fetched to assume that, left on their own at this level, novice principals tend to learn to perform their duties by trial and error. This is alluded to by Mr. Fire's following remarks:

*...(PMDP) is not talking to the new principal who is entering the field ...you pick up here and there things which are important ... but you learn as you do things.*

He proceeded to say:

*I would probably recommend that there could be some kind of programme that could answer or make or equip the principal to be able to respond to day to day activities he is engaged in.*

Even Mrs. McLite, after 'some relevant and satisfactory' induction material, was not convinced they she was adequately equipped to handle her mandated duties without additional help in the form of 'further clarification'. One inference that is drawn from the elicited data is that a gap exists between the theoretical knowledge imparted during induction and putting that to practice in catalysing the desired transformation in schools. Bush (2007) and Dinham (2008) view this gap as negotiating a balance between tactical skills (i.e. putting into practice the new democratic policies and initiatives) and strategic skills (i.e. eliciting compliant participation from all school stakeholders in the democratic transformation process). Thus, a deductive thought is that induction, without an on-site capacity enhancing programme, is insufficient. From this perspective, the role of induction as a preparatory exercise should be complemented by contextualised guidance and support to maximise its benefits to the newly promoted principals.

Documents reviews and observation brought to light the fact that principals bridged the aforesaid gap by utilising the most influential and experienced staff members to relay information and guide them on areas of uncertainty. In addition, existing structures and policies were not radically dismantled. The document reviewed and observation reflect that this was essential in

preventing unnecessary tensions and confrontations. Hence, negotiating the balance referred to earlier, occurred as a gradual incremental change process as the newly promoted principals asserted themselves. The influential and experienced staff members deployed to serve as catalyst in exposing the staff to the novice principals initiatives represents an asset-based approach. Actually, the new principal was mobilising and maximising existing strengths of the staff towards achieving the intended goals of the school through these members.

Over and above, during the incremental change process, leadership through existing structures is “leadership determine by purpose rather than by rank” (Jackson &Templay, 2007, p.60). In essence, this portray a shared form of leadership or distributed leadership. Hence, the absence or flaws in or deficiencies emanating from lack or partial induction programmes are catered for through the asset-based approach and distributed leadership.

All the participants were then assessed on the in-service capacity building initiatives through this question:

#### **4.3.3. Developmental workshops**

The paradox of the introductory years to principalship was discussed in 2.2. of the Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks chapter. The deficiency model of the paradox portrayed novice principals’ development as dependent on external intervention in the form of developmental workshops Table 2 reflects that novice principals received capacitation through these external interventions (as tabulated). Scholars mentioned in this section favour equipping novice principals through these initiatives to catalyse transformative change in their school effectively. Excerpts from the interview interactions with the novice principals reveal the purpose for the conduction of these programmes. The personal evaluation on the efficacy of the workshops is discussed in 4.3.4. of this chapter.

**Table 2: WORKSHOPS ATTENDED BY EACH NOVICE PRINCIPAL**

Mr. Lexus	Mrs. McLite	Mr. Tiger	Mr. Fire
1. School Governance	School Governance	School Governance	School Governance
2. Finance Management	Finance Management	Finance Management	Not attended
3. Strategic Planning	Not attended	Not attended	Not attended
4. Curriculum Management	Curriculum Management	Curriculum Management	Discipline
5. Not attended	Discipline	Not attended	Discipline
6. Not attended	Monitoring	Monitoring	Not attended

Naledi Pandor, the former South African National Minister of Education, once reported that novice principals, in particular, cannot analyse, solve problems, devise strategic interventions and plans, formulate programmes that are directed at successfully running schools (Business Day, 10 September 2006). Ramphele (2007) further argues that attempts by the DoE to transform the grossly inequitable and inadequate South African education system is characterised by a failure to translate good policies into sound practices. Silhouetted against the background portrayed by Pandor and Ramphele is the new world marked by unprecedented responsibilities, problems and roles in which novice principals ply their professional trade. In the transformation process of the democratic education system they are expected to learn to rethink goals, financial management, staffing, acquisition of learning resources, assessment methods, technology, the use of space and time (Levine, 2005). It is, thus logical that they attend or are exposed to a plenitude of multifarious developmental workshops to capacitate them on the re-culturing process of aligning schools with the DoE national vision and direction through their mandated

duties. This is of paramount importance as they are the prime change agents tasked with the capillarisation and fostering of the DoE tenets of the democratic education system.

Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2001) point out that in service capacity building innovations for newly promoted principals are about transformation. Coincidentally, this research project was undertaken in the aftermath of electing new SGBs. This marked the cessation of the three years legislated tenure of the former SGBs. Consequently, the proliferation of school governance workshops can be attributed to the initiation of the newly-elected SGB members into their new roles and responsibilities. The majority view suggests that these in-service workshops prioritised contextualised role embedded learning coupled with the on-the-job application of knowledge and relevant practices. Nevertheless, it is evident, from the verbatim quotations of individual participants that the envisioned outcomes for such initiatives were divergent.

Mrs. McLite pointed out that the School Governance in-service programme were for the following purposes:

*1)... the treasurer, secretary, chairperson and principal...were given their duties...job descriptions... and draw a clear line between governance and management.*

Mr. Fire added that the one he attended was: *...for advertised posts...*

And Mr. Lexus stated that the workshop attended was for: *... strategic planning...*

Moreover, the DoE has an educational obligation to fund the schools through the Norms and Standards Allocations. Therefore, the DoE is accountable to the Government to ensure that the administration of finances in schools is regulated and conducted procedurally. There is relatively a marked degree of correspondence in terms of the objectives of the Finance Management in-service trainings. Remarks from Mr. Tiger and Mr. Lexus portray that these initiatives:

*...speak to the amendment in the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA),*

Mr. Lexus foregrounded that:

*... another workshop ... was meant to prepare schools which are Section 20 that are allocated some Section 21 functions ...*

Mrs. McLite added that:

*...the chairperson, treasurer, secretary and principal were taught how to look at the school funds.*

The aforesaid expressions from the participants suggest that the finance in-service training sessions were conducted to empower the SGB on compiling, managing and monitoring school budgets informed by the PFMA.

Gray and Bishop (2009) suggest that there must be opportunities in leadership learning or development to solve a range of school problems: first through observation, then participation and finally actually leading school teams or structures. This requires processing the accelerated and expanded information, inter-alia, the fluid curricular changes as they constantly evolves to meet the education demands of the day.

Mrs. McLite stated that the Curriculum Management Workshops were conducted by the Educators Human Resource Development [EHRD] unit, the Teacher-Learner Support (TLS), and the Ward Manager whereby:

*... we were given the roles and responsibilities for each member of the school ...*

Mr. Lexus added that:

*... we were given some quality assurance tools ...in an attempt to promote quality education ... also control measures ...in managing curriculum ... like lesson registers, SA – SAMS...*

Currently, the prominent DoE's educational transformative initiative is the Continuous Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). This reformative strategy has been selectively introduced in certain grades. Another nationally – driven educational innovation is the Annual National Assessment (ANA) programme only in Grades 3,6 and 9 at present. The aim of this programme is to enhance proficiency in Mathematic and English language usage across the curriculum. This is a reactive response to the lowly South African ratings in comparison to their peers worldwide,

particularly in the subjects. Given that these are the latest DoE's curricular innovations novice principals, as instructional leaders, had to be capacitated on their contents. Consequently, the Curriculum Management Workshops geared towards equipping these principals with new skills, concepts and material so that by observing, participating and leading they effect the required curricular changes, were conducted.

Corporal punishment, according to the South African School Act (2006), is now illegal in our schools. Learner disciplinary issues, alive and kicking in schools, demand that measures be put in place to address these matters. Mr. Fire indicated that alternative disciplinary measures for learners and those standardised for educators were dealt with in some of these in-service workshops. The Workshop on Discipline, according to Mr. Fire, addressed learner discipline on:

*...Section 8 and 10 of the South African Schools' Act no 84 of 1996 which outlawed corporal punishment for democratic discipline ...*

Furthermore, regarding the disciplinary sanctions on deviant educators, Mr Fire indicated that:

*...the workshop... talks about Section 17 and 18 of the Educators' Employment Acts... regarding serious and not so serious educators misconducts and the appropriate sanctions in terms of disciplinary measures...*

Mrs. McLite explained that strategies of implementing and monitoring the learner disciplinary measures in the schools were also suggested during the course of the Discipline workshops.

*She stated that:... we were advised on the formation of committees... dealing with discipline at school and how to monitor it...*

The workshops mentioned are premised mostly on transformative initiatives as pointed out by Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2001). However, there seems to be a lack of consistency in the attendance of workshops by the individual novice principals. Mr Fire explained that the workshop coincided with the activities scheduled for the PMDP members and personal meetings with his Superintendent Educational Manager (SEM). Mr Lexus stated that the School Governance Workshop also covered the Strategic Planning topic. Both Mrs. McLite and Mr Tiger separated Monitoring from Discipline workshops. Yet, the document reviews

reflected that the workshop was on Discipline and Monitoring, two separate slots in a single workshop.

Distributed leadership is a necessity in introducing and monitoring the disciplinary matters through the school committees mentioned by Mrs. McLite. Delegated roles and responsibilities in Management School Finances entails working with and through the Finance Committee by adopting distributed leadership.

Coordinated curricular management required that each member of the school be assigned specific duties. The shared leadership responsibilities are a manifestation of the distributed leadership theory. Empowered by what they learnt in the workshop the novice principal enacted themselves as asset to their schools and the DoE. They were capacitated to ensure that, together with school committees, discipline, safety and security was entrenched in their schools. They were also instrumental in facilitating and enhancing quality education through the quality assurance tools, the allotted funds and translating the theoretical knowledge from workshops into practices designed to promote efficient and effective school functionality through teams, individuals in key portfolios and committees. The asset-based approach and distributed leadership theory is assumed to have featured prominently in all these activities.

#### **4.3.4. The efficacy of the developmental workshops**

Mulford and Silins (2003) contend that reforms for schools, no matter how will conceptualized, powerfully sponsored and closely audited tend to fail if the key change implementers are not capacitated. Democratic education reforms cast novice principals as buffers in many situations stemming from the contextual variables. They are continuously challenged with the necessity of convincing others to see the reason for the democratic educational change, deal with it, manage it and where necessary, actively take charge of it in the process of performing their duties (Gronn, 2003). Mr. Tiger disclosed that the inputs from the Finance Management Workshops altered the manner in which they (SGB) handled payments in these words:

*... they (SGB) wanted to pay people in cash but according to the PFMA ... payment has to be done through crossed cheques. This assisted me ... to develop their knowledge.*

Mr. Lexus, intent on doing things right with respect to financial management, instituted a financial officer: *...to work on the finance documents after these workshops.*

Furthermore, Mr. Fire, who bemoaned the excessive theoretical content of the Curriculum Management Workshops, conceded that:

*...the job description of the teacher, HOD, Deputy and principal that really helped...*

The responses from Mr. Lexus, in terms of being empowered in curricular matters, were the most enlightening. He advocated that:

*...the policy, planning and procedure documents that the workshop gave ...assisted in terms of developing policies that are directly used in this schools...*

and furthermore:

*...the tool, SA-SAMS... the implementation of that tool it is easy to monitor the amount of work in terms of those tasks that are covered by the educator... and the check those tasks against the Subjects Assessment Guidelines (SAG)*

Moreover:

*... I have managed to use the tool to be able to design and produce report cards ...for a complete learner performance and behaviour...*

The feedback from the participants suggest that the in –service initiatives exerted a minimal impact on how they run their school (except in Mr. Lexus’s case). given the critical importance of the novice principals roles and responsibility in the transformation of schools. Mr. Fire’s subsequent remarks hint at a possible cause for this discrepancy between the impact of workshops and the successful running of their schools. He said:



*...workshops which run according to what they think the principals need without getting from the new principal what they need.*

This is a powerful reminder of the arguments presented by Macbeath, *et.al*, (2007) that prescribing what and how for newly promoted principals is counterproductive given the wide contextual diversities. This is augmented by the challenge posed by Bush (2008) that it is yet to be seen if the national leadership training initiatives produce more proficient novice principals. Nevertheless, the documents reviews and observations reflected that novice principals supplemented external interventions from in-service programmes by evolving and conceptualising leadership practices from purposeful intrinsic engagement learning processes (Zaccaro, 2007). A typical example is Mr Lexus who is on record stating that:

*... so I have... the problems.*

This confirms what Olivares, Peterson and Hess (2007) suggest that maximising the potential for leadership capacity demands the integration and understanding of the development of the inherent intrinsic assets of the human agency in the context of others, social systems organisational strategies, mission and goals. This provides the frameworks to identify the role conceptualisation, initial socialisation, role identity and purposeful complimentary engagements with all relevant stakeholders. By inference, professional infancy learning, for newly promoted principals, is an interplay between incidental (opportunities to exercise inherent leadership traits) and orchestration (systematic external in-service interventions).

The success story of Mrs. McLite on curbing and reducing drinking alcohol during school hours is based entirely on distributed leadership. Starting with the formation of discipline committee to the co-operative interaction with the illiterate parents and shebeen owners, shared leadership responsibilities were established and forged. The positive outcomes reflect a collective synergy of synchronised assets of individuals involved in a particular action. The result, through this asset-based approach, had a combined effects that is greater than the sum of their separate effects. This is congruent to the earlier discussion on the interplay between opportunistic and strategic development in the leadership journey from the entry years of principalship. Hargreaves and Fink (2006, p.57) capture this view concisely as follows: “What novice principals require for this journey is a set of interrelated learnings that treat school leadership in a holistic rather

than a reductionist way. The learnings can be deepened, elaborated, nurtured, abandoned, connected and related to other learnings as the journey progresses”.

#### **4.3.5. Challenges experienced by novice principals**

The data elicited from novice principals’ challenges give prominence to issues of leading and managing, incorporating the main task of human resources development, finance, curriculum and external relations management as indicated in Bush’s (2007) observations. The challenges tabled below reflect context-based issues. This bears testimony to Aiken’s (2002) view that each school is a unique organisation with its own history, space and cast of characters. It can, then, be argued that the one size fits all nature (Bush, *et.al*, 2006) of the DoE’s legislated policies are flawed in terms of catering for the wide-ranging diversity of challenges encountered by newly promoted principals at their schools. Giving attention to the flaws will curb or prevent the option of taking action based on intuition, common sense, previously acquired experience, rational reasoning and fairly strong conviction about what constitute goods and ethical practices (Stoll & Louis, 2007) by novice principals when faced with the contextualised challenges. One, then, deduces that one way of amending the DoE policies would be initiating on-site capacity building initiatives, interactively and consultatively with key change effectors viz, novice principals. Work-based challenges embody transformative activities based on the specific contexts where the mandated duties and roles are performed.

The data elicited is tabulated for the purpose of comparing their responses:

**Table 3 CHALLENGES REPORTED BY THE RESEARCHED NOVICE PRINCIPALS.**

Mr. Lexus	Mrs. McLite	Mr. Tiger	Mr. Fire
<p>1)A small school with a limited enrolment thus limited Norms and Standards Allocation viz R51 000,00.</p> <p>2)School fencing still outstanding though requisitioning was done years earlier.</p> <p>3)Limited enrolment leads to low PPM (Post Provisioning Model)</p> <p>4)Limited number of educators for an extensive duty load: the result is work overload</p> <p>4)Limited enrolment compels the school to utilize only 6 out of 13 classes available for tuition purposes.</p> <p>5)Limited finance allocation mainly used for the Municipality water and electricity Bill (R36 000) only meagre funds are left for budgetary distribution for the rest of the school needs.</p>	<p>1) Vandalism was previously rife.</p> <p>2)Communication challenges, because of illiterate parents, faced in introducing new initiatives.</p> <p>3) High rate of unemployed thus high poverty index-leads to marked dropouts and needy learners at school.</p> <p>4)Child-parented homes dominant due to diseases – result in ill-disciplined learners.</p> <p>5)Traditional marriage force young girls to prematurely become wives and mothers – this marked hinders their academic and physical development</p> <p>6) Contentions among the staff due staff to difference of opinions.</p>	<p>1)The failure to retrieve official school documents from the previous incumbent for the past 14 months.</p> <p>2)Being thrown from pillar to post by the DoE officials when needing help on school issues.</p> <p>3)Heading order people who are resistant to change even if it is curricular change.</p> <p>4)Failure by the community to follow correct-procedures when they want to utilisethe school infrastructure.</p> <p>5) The long delays at the Human Resource unit – in attending to matters pertaining to individual school, deemed as very urgent in the context of the functioning of that school.</p>	<p>1) Teachers who are not passionate about their work: the result is that they produce learners who are not well-rounded at Grade 12 hence the low pass rate.</p> <p>2)Lacks the full complement of the SGB – he is compelled to account and be responsible for all the functions that should be performed by the SGB.</p>

The tabulated range of challenges do not give conclusive data on the adoption of the asset-based approach or distributed leadership. Notwithstanding, novice principals are still mandated with being community relations directors, medical supervisors, marketers, enforcers of policies, laws and regulations with all the attendant disciplinary measures, fundraisers, democratic instructional leaders with skills for distributed leadership (Hall, 2005) in their diverse contexts. It is said this requires a web of networking, teamwork and collaborative practices that constitute professional specific knowledge, skills and disposition which by their nature demand the adoption of the asset-based approach and distributive leadership. However, further clarification may be provided by the responses of the novice principals on the succeeding question.

#### **4.3.6. Coping strategies for the challenges experienced**

The coping strategies or mechanisms against the challenges participants experienced give credence to Bennet's (2003) remarks that the context in which novice principals operate is highly demanding, complex and multidimensional. Moreover, it has been noted that the existing body of knowledge on capacity building initiatives is often fragmented, lack a theoretical and empirical foundation and pay little attention to practice (Thrupp, 2005). The findings, however, suggest that the participants improvised and were very creative in tackling the challenges they encountered. Mr Lexus enlisted the assistance of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) to solve the school fencing problem and facilitate quality curricular initiatives. He explained that:

*...organisations by the names of Imbeleko, Valley Trust and Phila Nomakhelwane... facilitated the programme of fencing the school... offered remedial classes in English...helped matric learners with assignments and homework...sponsored learners with school uniforms and food packages...*

Mrs. McLite faced a high school dropout rate due to the high poverty index caused by the rife unemployment rate in her school context. Moreover, traditional marriages, with a profound influence on the academic direction of the young female learners portray the basis on which the novice principal's role is seen as of increasing change, complexity, diversity and intensity. She creatively sorted out the teenage-pregnancy challenges as follows:

*With the teenage-pregnancy we follow the policy from the Department... from which we have made a policy for our school... and really there is a difference.*

Mr Tiger invited experts to workshop his staff on how to cope with the various contextual challenges they encountered. He voiced out that:

*...I invited people who can help in advising how to work in a particular situation... then decided to workshop my staff with capacity building within the school... I am building the systems...*

The coping strategies or mechanisms enacted against the challenges each participant encountered are reminiscent of the explorative enquiry on the kind of leadership learning that can be regarded as effective, to know how leadership works, how leaders learn and can learn as mentioned by Patterson and West-Burnham (2005).

It seems attention must be paid to the hypothesis that there is an international curriculum for leadership development initiatives (Bush, 2008). This emanates from noting that networking with more experienced principals and mentoring featured prominently in the coping mechanism employed by all the participants. Mr Fire foregrounded that:

*...I network with other principals ... better off in terms of experience... and utilise the mentoring provided through the PMDP for day to day running of the school...*

Likewise, Mrs. McLite mentioned being mentored by a principal who is actively involved in PMDP whilst networking with peers in her vicinity.

Mr Lexus and Mr Tiger each claimed that:

*...I have been communicating a lot with neighbouring principals...*

The literature reviewed repeatedly points to mentoring and networking as crucial in developing newly promoted principals. The NCSL (2007) in the United Kingdom speaks of ‘*the knowing how*’ area of the principalship development where networking and mentoring are the most valued activities. Bush *et.al.* (2006) emphasise that these face to face events or purposeful school visits involve skills development, tools and techniques which enhance the coping strategies of the fledgling principals. In Australia, categorised under the social and intellectual developmental

domains, mentoring and networking are a compulsory integral components of the development of new and inexperienced principals. The strengths of these formal and informal partnerships lies in providing the human supportive resource when dealing with challenges. The hallmark of professional socialisation in USA is networking with relevant social partners as socialising agents into the new territory of being a new principal (Levine.2005). Formal mentoring and networking are at the core of the ACE: SL programme in South Africa. Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2011) point out that mentoring facilitates higher career satisfaction and expedite career progress. The written discourse indicates that, globally, mentoring and usually informal networking are essential cogwheels in the process of developing novice principals. Leithwood, *et.al.* (2007), in advocating for mentoring and networking as an aid to coping with entry challenges of principalship, states that they help the novice principal to learn to balance change and stability, control and flexibility.

Mathie and Cunningham (2003) note that the collective strengths of the community may be employed as a vehicle through which the institution base identifies problems and develops solutions that create innovations and increased opportunities for potential fulfillment using the asset-based approach. It seems Mr. Lexus's coping strategies to the challenges he experienced bear testimony to this academic view. Using the asset-based approach he drew on the strengths of the available resources in the form of community organisations. *Imbeleko* facilitated the solution to the fencing problem and provided the much-needed English tuition. *Phila Nomakhelwane* contributed to the material needs of the learners. *Valley Trust* facilitated the programmes that aided learners from illiterate families with their assignments. The institution-based problems were dealt with through tapping into the available community assets towards achieving intended goals – a precept from the asset-based approach. Networking, though informally, features a principle from asset-based approach. The strength recognised and mobilised in networking is the valuable experience of the sought principals.

The most important thing going towards is to break the boundaries between people so they can operate as a single intelligence (Harris, 2010). This facilitates learning opportunities and a platform for deliberate capacity building sustained through shared leadership that engages everyone in the learning process. The coping mechanism, employed by Mr. Tiger, in handling the challenges he encountered is a practical illustration of this view. To capacitate his staff and

initiate a unifying learning process he invited a wide spectrum of experts to a groundbreaking workshop. A very powerful feature of a distributed leadership is reflected in this innovation viz production of knowledge, formally and informally, became the focus rather than the leadership role, position or a set of competencies (Harris, 2007b). Moreover, Mr. Tiger added that he was building the systems by engaging different people including the local Councillor. This exercise embraces a distributive trait of leadership and it creates fertile grounds to cultivate learning communities and manage diversity in a learning community. It also facilitates the anchoring of the democratic principles in the social partners of the school.

Likewise, how Mrs. McLite handled the teen-pregnancy phenomenon by adapting the Departmental guidelines when formulating the school policy, is a distributed leadership practice. An educator was delegated the responsibility of putting the policy into practise. The coping strategy being an interaction fostering representational power in leadership promoted shared relational leadership. This is an integral component of distributed leadership.

#### **4.3.7. Novice principals as assets to their schools**

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) defines democracy as the exercise of the human agency about intentional action, exercising choice, making a difference and monitoring effects. Novice principals are mandated to enact democratic reforms through their duties in a climate where knowledge is flexible, ever-expanding and an ever-shifting resource (Hargreaves, 2003). Failure to enact one as an asset in this age of chaotic educational change and related complexities have resulted in a variety of leadership dysfunctionality features, including a culture of dependency, divisiveness among staff, loss of integrity, an end to ingenuity and emotional strain (Lindle, 2004). The USA concept of personal socialization stipulates that, as democratic leaders, novice principals are expected to mobilise, foster and promote positive changes by employing personal strengths and assets (Crow, 2006). By implication, novice principals must enact the role of being the designers and producers of change practices in their diverse contexts. Testimonial practical aspects of this theoretical argument are evident in activities generated by both Mr Lexus and Mrs. McLite. Mr Lexus enact himself as an asset in the following manner:

*I decided to run a night school... as the new curriculum demands that parents play a significant role in the education of their children..... I am running a Matric intervention Programme (MIP) ... teaching Grade 12 Mathematics and Physical Science .....*

Whereas Mrs. McLite enacted herself as an asset as follows:

*...have embarked on offering afternoon classes....run by students who have passed Matric to help illiterate parents ....*

They were both confronted with the problem of illiterate parents whose contributions to the democratic education of their children is of essence. Consequently, they enacted themselves as assets to learners and illiterate parents by designing and producing a night school and afternoon classes initiatives, respectively.

In addition Mr Lexus, through the gardening project, and Mr Fire, through parents, are practicing the asset-based approach by being outward looking and visionary, respectively. This is noted from quoting Mr Lexus verbatim as follows.

*....there is a garden plot beyond which is done by the members of the community.....we managed to get the funding for fencing and there is a project which has promised to provide us with tanks so that we can use rain watering theplants ...*

andMr Fire said that through his lengthy exposure to existing school contextual variables and the related acquired experience he is:

*....able to redirect the school ....as the school used to be one of the those which are best ....so I am working hard with parents towards maintaining that status.*

According to Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2012) the enactment of an individual or a group as an asset is fostered by the conviction that every person has capacities, abilities and skills that can be tapped into towards achieving intended goals. That development should begin from the individual who enacts himself/herself as an asset. The summative outcome of this enactment is said to be an appreciate construction that sees members as having within themselves the capacity



to enrich and enhance the quality of life within their schools. These practical innovations mentioned by both Mr. Lexus and Mrs. McLite were verified through observations though in the document reviews scant attention was paid to them.

The enactment as assets to their schools and the DoE by the newly promoted principals is driven by a vision and a mission. Mr. Fire, working hard with parents through the SGB to redirect the school to its former glory; Mr. Lexus coercing the member of the traditional committee to be deputy chairperson on his SGB to eradicate criminal activities that beset the school, just to mention a few, embrace visionary leadership and a mission to attain that vision. The process towards attaining the vision is incremental in nature, it is accretive and it is the result of complex reciprocal interactions between the leaders, others and the social environment (Olivares, Peterson & Hess, 2007). Reciprocal interdependency, where leadership practices of different leaders require pooled inputs from one another to produce a particular school function, is one of the diverse pragmatic applications of the distributed leadership theory (Hall, 2007b). The aforementioned activities by the participants illustrate collaborative contributions towards school reconfiguration and organisational redesign from the collective administrative, instructional and governance. At the core of these contributions is the application of the distributed association of members, formally and informally. Organisational activities engineered through these associations is a source of unifying power and shared leadership.

#### **4.3.8. Leading, managing and transforming schools**

All the participants, directly or indirectly, refer to the decentralization of power as a transformative tool to ensure better collective development of all stakeholders. It must be noted that this does not imply that the formal leadership structures within the school are moved or redundant. Instead it is assumed that there is a powerful relationship between vertical and lateral leadership process, as suggested by Caldwell (2006). This is substantiated by Mr Lexus's remarks that:

*...I try ... to decentralise the power by forming committee of which the person in charge has all the authority to deal with the matters concerning that committee...*

Decentralisation of power is practised by delegation with authority and monitoring through meetings and team building exercises according to the elicited data. Mr Fire declared that:

*...a lot of delegation ... so delegation must go with monitoring and authority ...  
teambuilding to manage the weakest link and put the systems in place...*

This view is collaborated by MrsMcLite who instituted weekly development meetings whereby:

*...I used to delegate tasks and different topics to relevant people and give  
timeframes when the tasks have to be completed...*

One positive feature of this transformative agency is the facilitation of learning opportunities for all members of the school so that they can develop into productive leaders. Another important aspect of decentralising power is the enacting of the distributed leadership theory and the asset-based approach. The recognition of strengths and assets of all stakeholders to inspire positive transformative action for change is premised on the adoption of these theoretical frameworks. Over and above, the isolation and frustrations of being at the apex, mentioned earlier by newly promoted principals, is reduced.

A noticeable transformative character of the democratic education system is that it is market driven. Entrepreneurial skills to cope with the demands of the market beyond the school life must be introduced and instilled through curricular processes at the school. This is due to the fact that the system demands schools to equip learners with lifelong and self-sustaining skills. Mr. Lexus exemplifies this trait of the system through soliciting sponsorships for his school and planning a business breakfast to enhance quality teaching and learning. He expressed that:

*... lodging a campaign for quality learning programmes by trying partnership  
with business people...we will be having a business breakfast ...for business to  
come on board and pledge support...*

Moreover, to acquire resources necessary for transformative curricular activities he had solicited:

*...sponsorship from Germany for a smartboard with all the facilities and from  
Cheesekids for paint....*

The forging of entrepreneurial partnership with the market beyond the school is a transformative tool and also educational to the learners and educators in his school and the community.

Dimmock and Walker (2005) foreground that educational transformations has given schools around the world a multi-ethnic nature. Consequently, novice principals nowadays shoulder the responsibility for shaping and transforming their schools in ways that value and integrate heterogeneity into successful learning communities for all. By implication, the diverse spectrum of the school going South African society must be familiarised with the concept of multiracial and multi-ethnic schools. This is part of the demise of the apartheid system of education. Mrs. McLite is pioneering this transformation in her school by twinning with Kearsney College.

*...I am also working with Kearsney College...*

This institution is one of the elite, multi-racial, multi-ethnic private independent schools in KwaZulu – Natal, frequented by children of the country's business, social, political and religious leaders.

Mr. Tiger and Mr. Fire raised a salient point on democratic approaches blended with dictatorship as a mechanism of transforming their schools. Though not verbally stated, the suggested notion of this phenomenon is also captured through the monthly monitoring and evaluation meetings mentioned by Mr. Lexus and Mrs. McLite. Mr. Fire and Mr. Tiger indicate that democratic approaches, if not spiced with a bit of dictatorship, lead to laissez faire and goals are not accomplished.

*...I like the democratic way of doing things but there are certain things that require a bit of dictatorship because now if you are too democratic that leads to laissez faire... things do not happen.*

The same view is echoed by Mr. Tiger who declared emphatically that:

*...you are an agent of change so take a stand and bring about change... certain things need a little bit of dictatorship... instilling ethics... team building must have authority within it so that responsibilities will taken into account...*

This is in line with work ethics whereby DoE legislative documents are dictated to all schools without consultation or seeking inputs from the change implementers. However, intra-school matters, like bereavement policies, are open to democratic negotiations involving all relevant stakeholders. Mr Tiger emphasised that, to ensure an equitable application of this blend in transforming his school, an expert, Mr. Nkosi, was invited to address them. He enthused that the expert equipped them with techniques of managing change in a changing world.

#### **4.4. Chapter summary**

Guided by the key research questions, informed by the literature reviewed and the adopted theoretical frameworks, the findings and discussions suggest that democratic educational transformation warrants for a new understanding of socialising novice principals. The research project indicates that the challenge is to identify the elements that are essential in the development of novice principals. These elements must include the capacity to take on a broad range of responsibilities, facilitate shared leadership and promote an asset-based approach to leading and managing schools. Moreover, developmental innovations for capacitating principals must be mandatory and not exclusive as the Principals Management and Development Programme (PMDP) and the Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership (ACE: SL).

Above all, the researched novice principals, to varying degrees, were able to improvise and express their innate leadership aptitudes over and above the help from outsiders. Hence, opportunities to develop emanated from the challenges they encountered.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with data presentation, analysis and discussing the findings as derived from observations, documents review and semi-structured interviews. The collected data was critiqued through the literature reviewed and the adopted theoretical frameworks, guided by the key research questions. This chapter, then, focuses on summarising the entire research project, drawing conclusions from the aforesaid findings and proposing pertinent recommendations informed by the stated conclusions. A chapter summary concludes these discussions.

#### **5.2. Summary of the study**

Chapter One, designed to give a bird's eye view of the overall research study, outlined the background and the nature of the leadership and management experiences of novice principals. Then, the necessity of undertaking this research project was sequentially unfolded through the focus, content, purpose, significance and rationale for this study. The literatures to be reviewed and related theoretical frameworks, premised on the key research questions, were stated. An explanation of terms used to narrate the research process accompanied the research design and methodology to include the essential components of the chapter.

Chapter Two interrogated and reviewed the literature that speaks to the research topic from diverse local and international scholastic works. Theories, perceived as appropriate to frame the research project were adopted and the reasons thereof were also supplied in this chapter.

Chapter Three located the research project in a specific paradigm which best resonates with the research design and the adopted methodology. This was succeeded by indicating research instruments utilised to elicit and collect data from participants, namely, observations, documents review and semi-structured interviews. Related phenomena that facilitate the research process, e.g. sampling and piloting were also mentioned prior to discussing the data analysis techniques.

Ethical considerations observed and integrated into the study with all the variables viewed as limiting factors to the project were also outlined as a conclusion to this chapter.

Chapter Four dealt with the presentation of the data elicited from the participant novice principals. Guided by the key research questions, the presented data was then critiqued using the reviewed literature and the theoretical frameworks. Findings stemming from critiquing the data were then discussed. This led to references being drawn, deductions being made and emergent themes being suggest in concluding the chapter.

Chapter Five is an overall reflection on each chapter of the entire research project. Conclusions, premised on the findings outlined in the previous chapter, are foregrounded. Pertinent recommendations, based on the aforementioned conclusions, are then suggested to conclude the prominent aspects of the chapter.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

The biographical data analysis and findings determined the following conclusions:

The cumulative experience, prior knowledge and appropriate qualifications are not a sufficient guide to equipping newly promoted principals with the expertise demanded by their mandated duties. Pre- service capacitation is required for the transition from a pre-dominantly teaching base to being the chief executive officer of the school. This capacitation would facilitate the process of coping with the entry demands of the principalship. They would also enhance the appropriate entrenchment of the DoE vision and the direction in terms of the democratic system in schools. The capacitation initiatives would acquaint novice principals with techniques of involving the relevant human resource in the process of reculturing schools to the current democratic practices of leading and managing schools.

Given the diversity of contextual variables prevailing at individual school sites, capacity building initiatives for novice principals must be contextualised. Translating the theoretical DoE policies and prescriptive documents into practicable agendas necessitates an on-the-job assistance for newly promoted principals. Failure to pay attention to contextualising capacity building strategies is an incentive to a trial and error approach of leading and managing schools. Successfully introduced contextualised capacitation promotes a process of learning from and

with the human resource at the school site through interactively interrogating the DoE policies and the legislative documents.

School leadership and management duties in the democratic education era demand that newly promoted principals enact current reforms in a climate where curricular changes are fluid, ever-expanding and ever-shifting. The commensurable increase in the nature and scope of the educational transformative innovations entails that in-service workshop be established. The prime aim of these workshops is to expose novice principals, in particular, to the new educational innovations and to help them process the accelerated and expanded information that is constantly evolving to meet the educational demands of the day. The design and the content of these workshops should be intended for developing the required skills and knowledge to enable novice principals to transfer those skills and knowledge to their school contexts.

It was also noted that challenges encountered by novice principal go beyond the scope of the above stated workshops. Challenges relating to traditional marriages, a societal problem that impacts on the school life of girls and child-parented homes, are a few typical examples of these challenges. Unemployment, illiteracy and poverty influence the intra-school life tremendously, usually negatively. These must be taken into cognisance when conducting the whole school evaluation programmes to ensure that novice principals liaise with relevant aid agencies to cope with such challenges.

It was evident from the interaction with the novice principals that they mobilise and work with the human agency to articulate and achieve shared intentions and the national education vision. Consequently, they are continuously challenged with the necessity of convincing others to see reason for democratic change and expose them to the global educational reform process. This entails working together in partnerships of equals in an integrated, democratic approach to development. During this interaction, cultural modes including the school culture, are recognised as more powerful socialising agents than the overt professional strategic activities. This is one hurdle that novice principals contend with on assuming their mandated roles and responsibilities.

All the novice principals evolved strategies that enabled them to deal with the challenges they encountered constructively. Mrs McLite and Mr Fire sought the help of their respective Ward Managers to solve problems peculiar to school leadership and management. Mr. Lexus

maximised the involvement of the community-based assets in tackling the challenges he encountered. Mr. Fire utilised his connections with the dominant Union to access material that he used to run his school. Networking with more experienced successful principals was also fruitfully employed by these novice principal for empowerment and capacitation. Though Mrs McLite benefitted from the Principals Development and Management Programme through her mentor, she was not a registered member like Mr. Fire. Hence, only partial benefits could be derived from this association. All the novice principals benefited from the contributions made through community involvement.

## **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

### **5.4.1. The necessity of induction or orientation**

Educational reforms are influenced by industrial and economic reforms especially in the democratic dispensation of entrepreneurialship. It is, therefore, recommended that, as in the business sector, induction or orientation programmes be mandatory for all novice principals. This is of paramount importance because the nature and quality of the internal management of schools determine the extent to which schools are able to make the necessary democratic changes. Moreover, induction or orientation plays a key role in contextualising all preparatory initiatives or prior conceptual knowledge. In fact, it is virtually meaningless to talk about induction or orientation without reference to the school context.

### **5.4.2. Implementing distributive leadership and the asset-based approach**

The mandated duties of novice principals embody interactive, collaborative, collective and integrative features of democratic practices in schools. It is highly recommended to introduce, establish and sustain a web of networking, teamwork and interdependent practices within their schools. This is informed by the tenets of the democratic education system which demand shared decision making and an all-inclusive leadership development strategy i.e. working through teams and committees delegated with leadership and management functions. Existing functional structures and influential staff members may be utilised to facilitate this process. This provides



an excellent platform for implementing the asset-based approach in tandem with the distributed leadership theory. Mobilising and maximising existing strengths in the human resources catalyses achieving the intended school goals more rapidly.

#### **5.4.3. Site-based mentoring and coaching**

Globally, as reflected in the literature reviewed, capacity building programmes designed for novice principals are being introduced. e.g. National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, and the four conceptual socialisation frameworks for novice principals in the United States of America (USA). In South Africa the Principals Management and Development Programmes (PMDP) and the Advanced Certificate in Educational: School Leadership (ACE: SL), were earlier mentioned. It is recommended that it must be compulsory for novice principals to be capacitated through these programmes. During this training period, the novice principals should be regarded as being on probation with full pay and all the attendant benefits. These programmes must be characterised by face to face purposeful mentoring or coaching to discuss work related issues and embrace a motivational aspect of leading to accreditation and permanent employment. Using these developmental strategies, the interplay between contextual variables and inherent leadership assets of the principal and the related human resources will be nurtured and maximised.

#### **5.4.4. Inter-departmental and community networking**

Inter-departmental networking is recommended to cope with extra-ordinary challenges, namely, unemployment and traditional marriages'. Novice principals should liaise with the Department of Social Welfare for financial grants to sustain child-parented homes and counter the effects of unemployment. The Department of Health would be a useful partner in dealing with matters of teenage pregnancy and the local community in curbing traditional marriages involving school going females. Furthermore, social partnership should be forged with local non-governmental organisations and projects like gardening championed to promote ownership of the school by the local community. Briefly, vertical Departmental and horizontal grassroots level networking with relevant stakeholders is highly recommended.

#### **5.4.5. Strategies for adopted enactment as assets**

Novice principals are expected to enact themselves as assets in the process of transforming their schools. It is, therefore, recommended that they initiate innovations that minimise the challenges they experience. A typical example is instituting a night school or afternoon classes to deal with illiteracy. Furthermore, novice principals are encouraged to be entrepreneurial in their approach, to the acquisition of resources. This is achievable through negotiated sponsorship with the business world and also fund-raising activities in the schools. In addition, it is recommended that novice principals uphold the democratic principle of lifelong learning. This will promote being avid readers of the current global trends in education reforms.

## **5.5. Chapter summary**

This chapter reflected on overall summary of the entire project. This was meant to cohere the key research questions, literature reviewed and theoretical frameworks with the findings. These findings were the ultimate outcome of discussions involving the three aforementioned elements. The findings are the basis on which the conclusions were made and discussed. Each individual conclusion elicited a corresponding individual recommendation.

It must be mentioned that female representation in the study is not congruent to the number of males who participated. Female novice principals were very reluctant to participate in the research process because they were concerned that their effectiveness in running their schools was being evaluated. This may be construed as a limiting factor in this study.

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## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal

APPENDIX B: Permission letter to the KZN Department of Education

APPENDIX C: Permission letter from the KZN Department of Education

APPENDIX D: Permission letter to the school principals

APPENDIX E: Declaration of consent from the school principals

APPENDIX F: Bibliographical details of the principals

APPENDIX G: Interview schedule



## APPENDIX A



Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre  
Westville Campus  
Private Bag x54001  
DURBAN, 4000  
Tel No: +27 31 260 8350  
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609  
[snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za)

16 May 2012

Mr TE Makhanya (912429341)  
School of Education

Dear Mr Makhanya

**PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0174/012M**

**PROJECT TITLE: Novice Principals: The challenges of leadership and management in four schools in Pinetown District**

In response to your application dated 08 May 2012, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

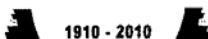
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.  
**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
**Professor Steven Collings (Chair)**  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

cc. Supervisor – Mr SE Mthiyane  
cc. Dr MN Davids  
cc. Mr N Memela / Mrs S Naicker



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX B

### PERMISSION LETTER TO THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BOX 211

HAMMARSDALE

3700

05 April 2012

Attention: The Head of Department (Dr N.S.P. Sishi)

Department of Basic Education

Province KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X 9137

3201

Dear Sir

#### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Mr Thembinkosi Makhanya, am a Masters degree student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). My specialization is in Education Leadership, Management and Policy. To satisfy the requirements of the degree, I am expected to submit a research dissertation. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in the following schools under your jurisdiction: Emaxulwini Primary School, Ekwandeni Primary School, Ukusa High School and Nogunjwa High School.

The title of my research project is: *Novice principals: the challenges of leadership and management in four schools in the Pinetown District*. The study aims at exploring the leadership and management challenges experienced by newly-promoted or novice principals. Data

collection will be through semi-structured interviews, document review and observation during the performance of your duties as a principal. You will be interviewed for approximately 30-40 minutes at a time and a place convenient to you. The interviews, with your permission, will be voice recorded to assist me to concentrate on the actual interview. You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and alphabetical letters will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews and they have been purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring penalties.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor using the information contact details: Mr Sphiwe E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031- 2601870; E-mail: Mthiyanes@ ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Mr T.E. Makhanya

Cell: 08284556008

Tel: (W) 031- 77030350

E-mail: [makhanya1@yahoo.com](mailto:makhanya1@yahoo.com)

APPENDIX D

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

BOX 211

HAMMARSDALE

3700

5 April 2012

Attention:.....

.....Primary/Secondary/High

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am a Masters degree student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). My specialization is in Education Leadership, Management and Policy. A research dissertation is required for the completion of the degree. Hence, I herein request your consent to participate in the research project.

The title of my research project is: *Novice principals: the challenges of leadership and management in four schools in the Pinetown District.*

The study aims at exploring the leadership and management challenges experienced by newly-promoted or novice principals. Data collection will be through semi-structured interviews, document review and observation during the performance of your duties as a principal. You will be interviewed for approximately 30-40 minutes at a time and a place convenient to you. The interviews, with your permission, will be voice recorded to assist me to concentrate on the actual interview. You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstances during and after completion of the research. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Pseudonyms/ fictitious will be used to represent you and your school. Participation is voluntary, therefore, you are free

to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences on your part. Please take note that there will be no financial benefits that you may accrue as a result of your participation in this research project.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal has approved the research project (see attached copy). An application to conduct the research has been submitted to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education. I am still awaiting their response on this matter.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my Supervisor using the following contact details: Mr Sipiwe E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031- 2601870; E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mr T.E. Makhanya

Cell: 08284556008

Tel: (W) 031- 77030350

E-mail: [makhanya1@yahoo.com](mailto:makhanya1@yahoo.com)

## APPENDIX E

### Declaration

I..... (Full name of participant)  
hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study:  
*Novice principals: the challenges of leadership and management in four schools in the Pinetown District.*

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: .....Date:.....

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant:.....Date:.....

Thanking you in advance.

Mr. T.E. Makhanya

## APPENDIX F

### Novice Principals' project

Bibliographical details of participants.

- (1) Position currently holding: .....
- (2) Year appointed:.....(date)
- (3) Age group: tick the one relevant to you
- 3.1. 25-45 years ☐
- 3.2. 46-65 years ☐
- (4) Gender:.....
- (5) Qualifications you hold:.....
- (6) Work experience:.....

Level	Number of years
6.1. Level one educator	
6.2. Level two or HOD.	
6.3. Level three or Deputy Principal.	
6.4. Level four or Principal	

To be filled before the interview



## APPENDIX G

### Semi Structured Interview Schedule

1. When you were appointed, were you inducted or oriented into your new position as a principal? Please explain who and how were you oriented.
2. Were you satisfied with the quality and relevance of this orientation? Kindly elaborate on your answer.
3. Have you undergone any development workshop
  - 3.1. School governance;
  - 3.2. Financial management;
  - 3.3. Curriculum management;
  - 3.4. Discipline and monitoring?
4. To what extent did the material obtained from these workshops influence how you run your school?
  - 5.1. What challenges are you experiencing in performing your mandated leadership and management duties?  
Please list them (e.g. lack of support from .....poor service delivery from.....etc)
  - 5.2. How, as a novice principal are you dealing with these challenges or coping with them in performing your duties?
6. How do you enact yourself as an asset to your school and the Department of Education i.e. how do you see yourself as an asset to the parents, educators and the DoE?
7. As a novice principal how do you lead, manage and transform your school? (i.e. delegation; democratic/visionary leadership, teamwork; development of school structure etc)